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# STREET-LAND

ITS LITTLE PEOPLE AND  
BIG PROBLEMS

BY

PHILIP DAVIS

Editor of *The Field of Social Service*  
Director, Civic Service House, Boston  
Formerly Supervisor of Licensed Minors  
(Boston Public Schools)

ASSISTED BY

GRACE KROLL

*Illustrated from Photographs*



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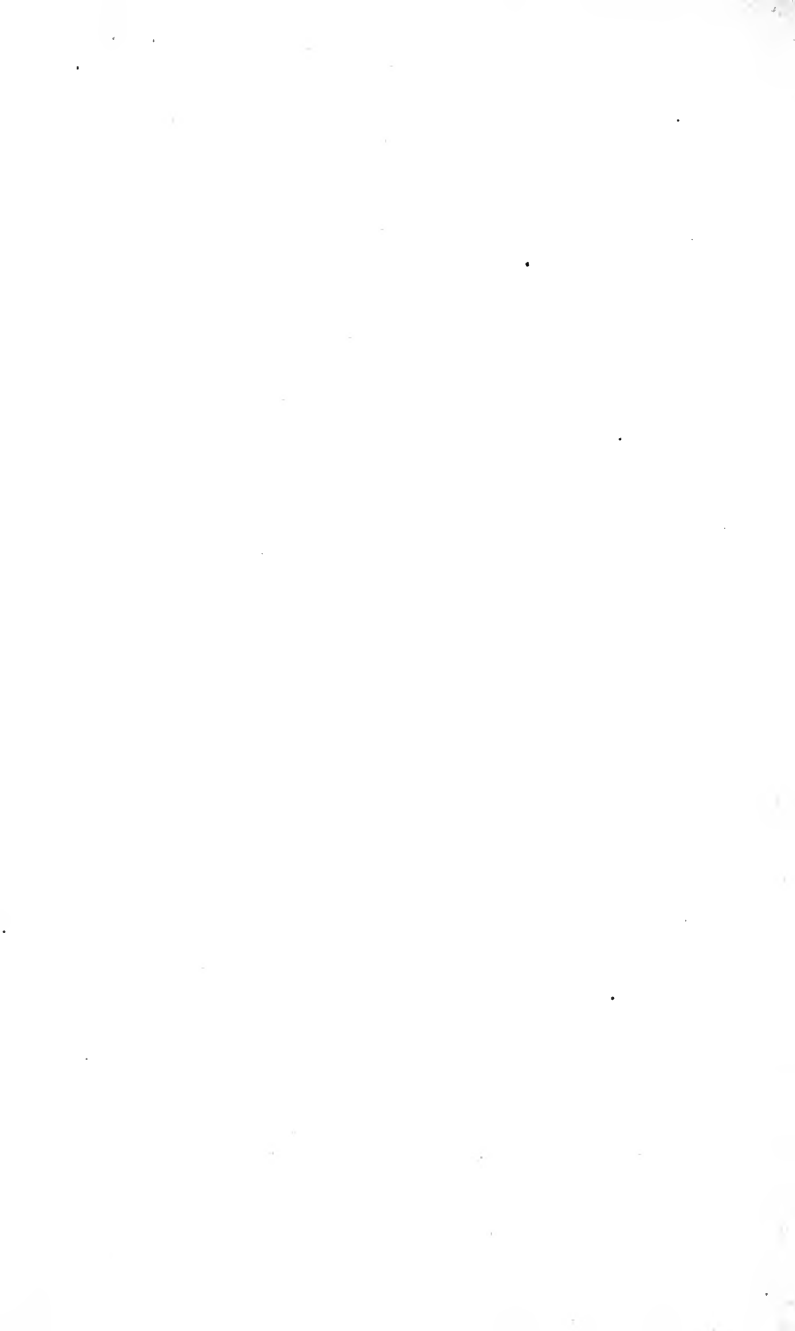
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Dedicated to the memory of  
**Mrs. Woodrow Wilson**

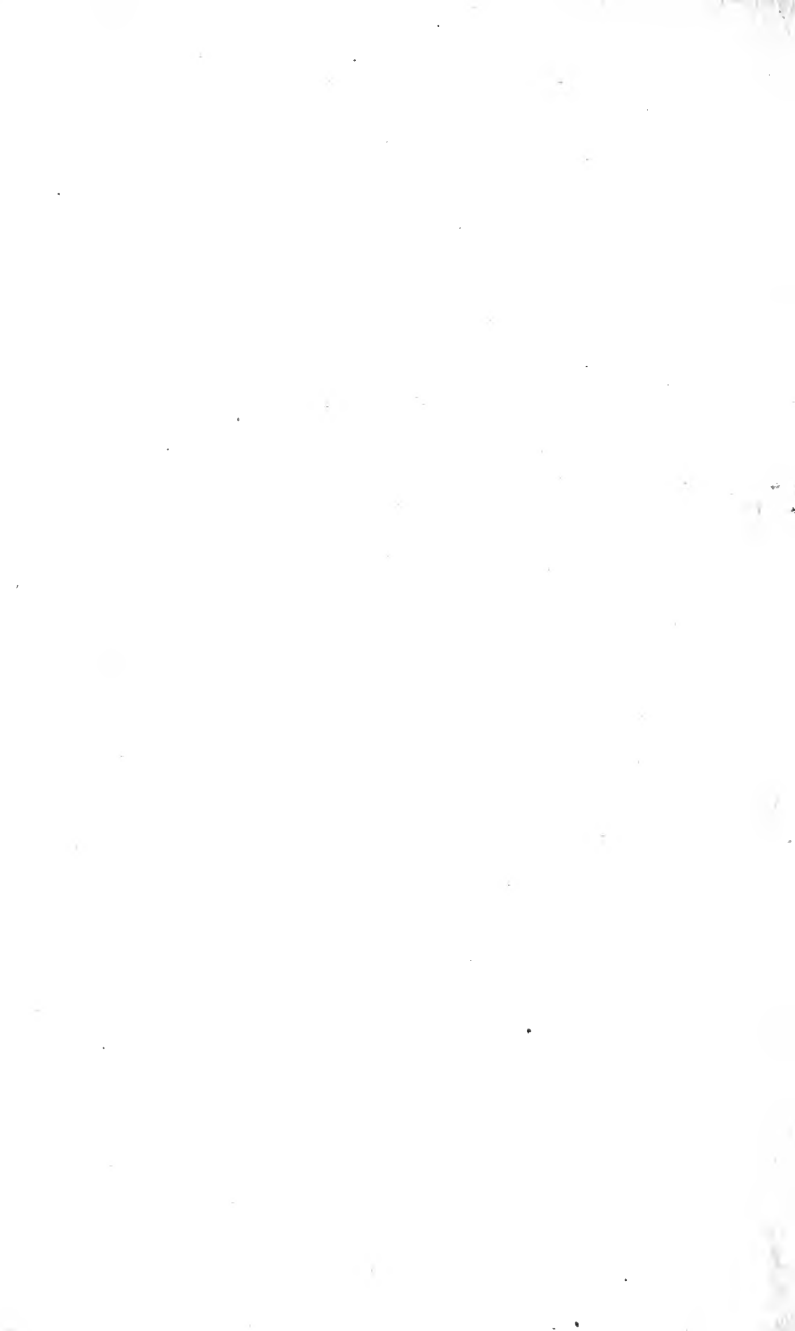




## FOREWORD

The author is indebted to Mrs. Pauline Agassiz Shaw, whose sympathy with the needs of city children has made possible important enterprises touching our neighbors from kindergarten to citizenship.

The volume is offered to the public in the hope that it may stimulate the movement to provide a safer and saner environment for city children.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	xiii
CHAPTER	
✓ I IN STREET-LAND . . . . .	I
✓ II STREET HAZARDS . . . . .	31
✓ III NIGHT CHILDREN . . . . .	62
✓ IV SCHOOL DESERTERS . . . . .	94
✓ V VACATION TIME . . . . .	118
✓ VI CHILD WORKERS IN THE STREETS . . . . .	143
✓ VII CHILD WORKERS AND VAGRANTS . . . . .	172
✓ VIII STREET WORK: THE STORY OF AN EX- PERIMENT . . . . .	197
✓ IX STREET LIFE: A PROGRAMME . . . . .	227
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	277



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Saturday-night "shiners" <i>See page 156</i> <i>Frontispiece</i>	
Types of market boys . . . . .	14
Little woodpickers . . . . .	22
Mumps circulating . . . . .	42
Children of the dumps . . . . .	46
Street arrests . . . . .	58
Bunking out for the night . . . . .	68
Willie, the food scavenger . . . . .	74
Beyond the jurisdiction of the truant officer. .	96
The girl behind the pushcart . . . . .	154
The night shift . . . . .	160
Fighting the coal trust . . . . .	170
5 o'clock Sunday morning in "Newspaper Row" . . . . .	200
Self-government in action . . . . .	220
Profitable use of school roof . . . . .	238
A dump turned into a playground . . . . .	248



## INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I was called from the field of organized labor to supervise the most disorganized labor imaginable—child labor in city streets. Newsboys, bootblacks, peddlers, messenger boys, delivery boys, “bag boys,” wood-pickers—about five thousand in Boston alone, most of them school children,—were everywhere on the streets, too often during school hours.

Stirred by the constant sight of these children toiling in the streets, Boston, thanks to its New England conscience, was first in securing a model child labor law for street work; in devising a system of licensing those allowed to sell under the law; and in working out a plan of street supervision under the direction of a Supervisor of Licensed Minors. The first definite result was a considerable reduction in

the number of working children. The Newsboys' Republic and Newsboys' Court were some of the by-products of this system of supervision.

This volume is the result of five years of daily supervision over three thousand juvenile street workers of school age and of many thousand juvenile street idlers of all ages. Much tramping night and day over the proverbially crooked streets of Boston, made me realize how much larger was the army of idle children on the streets who were not looked after at all.

The prerogatives of the loafing boy as against the working boy came home to me with special force the first evening after the passage of a new law ordering all licensed children to stop work at eight o'clock. The first boy I found selling after eight o'clock had a "corner" in the worst district of the city. There was therefore an additional reason for sending him home early.

"How about the new law?" I asked, pointing to the clock.



The boy packed up and went home. Fifteen minutes later I found him back on the corner and deep in a game of craps with a gang of older boys.

"Back again?" I said.

"I ain't sellin'," he answered.

He knew all about the new law because the teachers had explained it in all the schools that day. But nothing had been said about "shooting craps" after eight o'clock at night.

Since then I have seen all kinds of loafing children. Why should they receive less care and guidance on American city streets than the working children? The only attention they get, generally from the "cop," is when they are caught in wrong-doing. They are then, in nine cases out of ten, handled by the officers as if they were criminals. The new view underlying the civil procedure of modern juvenile courts, which is fast displacing the older criminal procedure as applied to children, has not as yet permeated the American police force and, possibly, not even the American public.

✓ The new view of the tender child is that it is incapable of crime and, whether in or out of mischief, is always in need of protection, encouragement and care. This volume urges that this more enlightened view is especially applicable to the typical street child, but too often a delinquent in the making. Hence the attempt to describe the important street influences which are now undoing the work of home and school.

Street activities, heretofore either ignored or condemned, must henceforth be organized under direction and close supervision. The many brilliant experiments for taking children off the streets, which have inspired the founding of many a social settlement, boys' club, vacation school and recreation center, must be supplemented by further experiments to organize and supervise the lives of the many thousands of children still on the streets and destined to remain there for some time.

Helping street children is the result of a genuine impulse common to people in all walks of

life. The appeal to help has interested business men, club women, physicians, lawyers, ministers and editors, as well as plain fathers and mothers. Much is being done by them all, although in a somewhat disorganized fashion. As in the case of open-air classes for anæmic children, so obviously necessary—indeed humanely imperative—the help given street children hardly reaches five per cent. of those in need. Furthermore, many communities and neighborhoods where street life is at its worst care least about improving it.

It is absolutely essential that every neighborhood play a searchlight on its own street conditions in order to locate and eradicate the destructive influences and to lift the life of the street to the level of that which is best in the life of the home and the school.

Street children, like the streets, are in a peculiar sense, public property of which the community is trustee. As the street department represents the community's sense of obligation toward public property of one kind, so the edu-

cation and recreation departments must reflect concretely its sense of responsibility toward the children of the streets. The streets, heretofore nobody's special business, ought, in this new sense, to become our common concern. We must learn to recognize their profound influence on the eleven million city children who, whether mine or yours, are entrusted to us "for keeps."

PHILIP DAVIS.

CIVIC SERVICE HOUSE,  
Boston, Massachusetts.

April 10, 1915.

## **STREET-LAND**



# STREET-LAND

## CHAPTER I

### ✓ IN STREET-LAND

\ "Poor little rich" boys in city streets — The Russian cobbler's store-home —  $\angle$  Street influences: comments by Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, Judge Lindsey — Street problem national —  $\nabla$  Visit to leading American cities — From farm to city — Evolution of Street-Land — Causes and growth of city congestion — The modern tenement home — Disintegration of the home — The street as a playground — Night gayety — Festive days in foreign quarters — Busy bees of the city — Games and gaming — Gang activities — Educational aspects of street life —  $\nabla$  Three-fold standard of conduct —  $\nabla$  The masterpiece of the street.

DR. WOODS HUTCHINSON of health fame once met Dr. Luther M. Gulick of playground fame on the street.

Said Dr. Hutchinson: "Where does your boy play?"

"On the street."

"So does mine. Do you think it is a good place?"

"No."

"Well," Dr. Hutchinson continued, "wouldn't it be a good thing to have a place where they could have some swings and some see-saws and a place to dig, and a place where they could make a boat and do things?"

"Yes," Dr. Gulick replied.

"Let us get one."

"All right."

Dr. Gulick, who tells the story, also tells the sequel:

"Dr. Hutchinson took one section of the neighborhood and I took another to find such a place. Difficulty after difficulty was encountered until we had to give it up."

This is the predicament in which two distinguished citizens of New York City found themselves with regard to their children. These men are far removed from the poverty zone. Imagine then the plight of poor city parents.



Take, for instance, the Russian cobbler, who, upon the death of his wife, transferred his six children and other belongings to his shoe store on a side street.

He was much impressed when he heard that the settlement across the way was going to discuss the subject of children on the streets.

"Mine golly," he exclaimed, "that's a good subject. I'll come over."

His shoe store was never intended for a home. Naturally, it overflowed onto the sidewalk. The children had to fall back on the street for all other than sleeping purposes. The street was something new in the lives of these children. They were born in a Russian village more nearly resembling a New England hamlet than the tenement district of a big city. Like all immigrant children, they plunged into Street-Land faster than Alice got into Wonderland.

Millions of children, many of them of the peasant type, are having their first taste of American life on crowded city streets. Never

did children shift for themselves as much as they do in our cities today. Some are left on the street alone at the age of two.

"What will the street do to the eleven million city children so largely dependent on them?" This question is of great moment to all parents and teachers whose work is being daily undone by the street.

Those who know the street best have repeatedly warned us against its dangers. Jane Addams makes this plea: "By all means let us preserve the safety of the home; but let us also make safe the street, in which the majority of our young people find recreation and form permanent relationships." Jacob Riis pointedly reminds us that "the street is all surface. Nothing grows there; it hides only a sewer." And Judge Lindsey, with characteristic energy, issues a call to arms: "We must battle against the street, the conditions, the environment, the causes, if we are to perform our full duty to our children."

These are not opinions but convictions based

on many years of observation and experience. They are the result of active and fruitful participation in a great variety of attempts to improve city life. They are reënforced by local studies made from many different points of view. Investigations of tenement-house commissions, immigration commissions, city surveys and, especially, recreation surveys,—all point to one conclusion: The street, though unfit for play, is nevertheless the playground of ninety-five per cent. of the children of most American cities.

The Recreation Survey of Milwaukee, for example, showed that wherever the population was densest and the youthful element per thousand greatest, play space was least available. Furthermore, the streets of those congested areas, though most used for play, were least fit for such a purpose. The Recreation Survey of Providence, Rhode Island, states that of six hundred and thirty-eight children seen playing, four hundred were on the streets. The Indianapolis Recreation Survey says, "From the

careful examination of every part of the city, it appears that fully eighty per cent. of the people live in districts where there are no available spots for games requiring space." A country-wide survey of street life would show convincingly that what is true of these cities is true of practically all American cities.

As Supervisor of Licensed Minors for the Boston School Committee, I visited many cities in order to find out what street children were doing and what was being done for them. I left Boston convinced that altogether too many of its children frequented the city dumps, only to find that in Baltimore the children used the gutter as their playground. For them, the open sewer was probably the laughing brook of the kindergarten story.<sup>1</sup> The East Side of New York was so crowded that a vacant lot was a luxury. Each side of the street

<sup>1</sup> The city of Baltimore is putting in a complete sewer system and asphaltting the streets at the same time. When the sewer is completed, Baltimore will at last be rid of the open gutter, its long-standing shame.

was pre-empted by pushcart peddlers hours before the children rose in the morning. The famous Chicago Loop, though one of the most congested business districts in the world, was full of children playing and working and loafing in the midst of danger.

In view of these findings, it was a unique privilege to join a delegation headed by Miss Addams on its way to Springfield to plead with the Illinois Legislature that at least the very little children be taken off the streets. One legislator disposed of the Boston Newsboy Law, which I was asked to describe, by saying, "We don't follow Boston styles."

Yet Springfield, Illinois, was just as backward as Springfield, Massachusetts, which had refused for two decades to avail itself of the very statute urged upon the Illinois Legislature. This in spite of the fact that the system had been in effect in Boston long enough to deserve a fair trial in neighboring cities. Hartford, across the Connecticut line, was

found even more stubborn than Springfield. Indeed it still refuses to take the newsgirls off the street.

My trip showed conclusively that every city may be singled out for some special phase of the street problem. But certain quarters in all cities reproduce the same street environment and the same street product with an exactness as though the productive processes were consciously standardized. Every juvenile court proves this regardless of the nationality of the child and the country he came from. Indeed in this country, the street boy and the juvenile court seem made for each other. In the old country, both the street and the court are unknown. There the boy is as native to the soil as are the trees and flowers.

We must never lose sight of the fact that many of the children now relegated to American streets are of peasant origin and rural birth. They may have been born in abject poverty, but there was plenty of air and sunshine. The millions of men, women and children who

now elbow each other on the streets and in the tenements of our large cities are mainly from farm and hamlet. This is true whether they come originally from rural America or Europe. Even our maligned friends in Chinatown—where streets are at their worst in every sense of the word—hail from peasant villages described in "Letters from a Chinese Official" as follows:

"Far away in the East, under sunshine such as you never saw—for even such light as you have you stain and infect with sooty smoke—on the shore of a broad river, stands the house where I was born. It is one among thousands; but every one stands in its own garden, simply painted in white or gray, modest, cheerful and clean. . . . Prosperous peasants people all the district, owning and tilling the fields their fathers owned and tilled before them. . . . Here in the lovely valley, live thousands of souls without any law save that of custom, without any rule save that of their own hearths."


Coming from hamlets where the unit of so-

ciety is the home and the river or highway is the street in the original sense of the term, the little people of Europe, sweet and simple, are suddenly plunged into the complex life of our American city streets and are overwhelmed as by the great waters they have just crossed.

I have never recovered from the effects of my own first days on the East Side. I was fourteen when I left my native village which, for peace and simplicity, well answers the description of the Chinese village.

The moment I landed I found myself in a new world: The houses, the streets, the crowds took my breath away. The hard pavement resounding with my steps frightened me. I looked in vain up and down the street for a blade of grass. I missed the river, the sweep of sky. For the moment, my spirit was utterly crushed by the brick and stone around me. Yet the East Side was not always characterized by stone streets and brick tenements. Like many American cities, it also began amid green pastures watered by a river.



Consider the history of the North End of Boston, one of the most congested districts in this country, where some seven hundred people jostle one another upon each small acre. Not so very long ago, it was a wooded hill surrounded by marsh and ocean. Today the filled-in marsh and millpond are teeming with human beings struggling for a foothold. On the southerly slope where once the "children played freely knee-deep in the grass, while the fresh sea breezes instilled in them the joy of living," there is standing room only for the new generation. 

The history of this end of Boston, now familiarly known as Little Italy, reveals the stages of the evolution of Street-Land characteristic of many such districts. The North End, at least all that was really worth owning, was once the property of William Copp. It was a fair-sized New England farm. Its chief feature was a windmill. Its cowpaths were destined to become the famous narrow and crooked streets and alleys of the North

End. Within a century, the southerly slope developed into a little hamlet with the main street at its base. A similar hamlet on the southerly side of Beacon Hill helped to raise the colony to the dignity of town. In 1822 Boston became a city. Today the population of the North End alone is thirty-four thousand. There are about twenty persons to the dwelling, while in some blocks, the density of population reaches the appalling figure of eight hundred and eighty per acre.

Some people choose to call such districts slums because the physical and moral atmosphere is not congenial to the eye and soul of man. What they really object to is congestion, the most obvious characteristic of these districts. The causes of congestion are many—the influx of native-born people from the country, the influx of immigrants from abroad and the high birth rate characteristic of the peoples of the New Immigration.

Furthermore, the people in these districts are trying the experiment of living over and under

one another. The block and lot system has become the universal pattern, not because it is most comfortable, but because it is cheapest. Under this system, front yards are given up as wasteful and back yards are crowded with houses. Necessarily, streets become narrower and alleys darker. Rooms are gradually shrinking in size. Cellars, basements and garrets are being pressed into service. Living rooms are turned into sweatshops. Taking in boarders becomes the rule. As a result, kitchens are frequently used as bedrooms, and some bedrooms are occupied by day shifts and night shifts. "Even the resting-place must run full time to meet the overhead expenses of the plant."

The sacrifice of space between houses and of all yard space, both front and back, led to the over-crowding of the diminutive tenement homes. The average tenement consists of a kitchen, a front room and one or two bedrooms always provided with double beds. The children are overlooked. Even their sleeping

quarters are forgotten except in so far as the beds of the adults can accommodate them. The cradle is gone. There is hardly room for the baby carriage.

The tenement home is a far cry from the old homestead of New England, or the home which the immigrants left behind them in the old country. The good old-fashioned home has absolutely broken down. Some one has called the city home a lodging house plus a Baltimore Dairy.

Such an institution, like the Baltimore Dairy Lunch itself, may be a very clever invention to meet the sudden needs of the day. But it does not serve the unchanging needs of childhood,—room, air, sunshine. The tenement home has neither nursery nor playroom. The space cannot be spared. Birth and death alike claim the privilege of privacy for but a moment. The home used to be the center of everything —“work, play, love and worship.” Today the theory seems to be that one either works or sleeps. Adults may have to submit, but the



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## Types of Market Boys



children rebel and desert the home for the street.

At no time is the modern tenement home so completely exposed as the day when it is on the move. Often the belongings are carried from house to house on a pushcart while the children trail behind. This is perhaps the saddest sight in Street-Land. Moving about destroys the attachments which are the very basis of good home life.

Out of seventy-five North End families revisited within a year, only two were found in the same houses. None of the others could be located anywhere.

Think of the New England homestead or the home of even the humblest European peasant on the move. Before it can emigrate, one of those peasant families needs a year to cut the old moorings and sell out. Here people pack their belongings, often only a cartful, and are gone over night. Worse still, they are frequently ejected. The sinister herald of ejection is the summons locally known as the

"Tzomes." In all tenement quarters, there are regular bureaus offering to do the job for a fee.

There are other factors besides city congestion which have disintegrated the home and which are therefore important to an understanding of the evolution of Street-Land.

Modern industry is one. The factory system took the productive activities out of the home and was the cause of many a mill town and many an abandoned farm. Thousands of families sold out their farms and moved into factory towns. Fathers and mothers were taken away from home the greater part of the day. Children, too, were put to work. In the organization of the mill-town home, children still too young to be in the factory were forced into the street. The law that children must play before they can work was defied. No provision was made for play either in or near the home.

This led to street play instead of home play and materially contributed to the breakdown of



the home. Little play grows out of activities still centered in the home. More than eighty per cent. of the pupils in the high schools and seventh and eighth grades in Providence, Rhode Island, in compositions on how they spent their leisure time, made no mention at all of home recreation. Even such delightful homey events as Easter and Christmas celebrations call for more room than a tenement has to offer. The modern tenement home has all but banished Santa Claus. But for the schools and settlements, children in Street-Land would hardly know Jolly Saint Nick.

So it happens that these children, robbed of play space both inside and outside their homes, have made the streets their daily playground. The word playground as applied to the street is almost a mockery. Some streets literally have no more than bare standing room. Nearly all streets are poor ground for play. Compare the soft give of the sod of lawn and lane with the stubborn asphalt of street and sidewalk. Such play as children have on the street is man-

aged in spite of obstacles, thanks to their imaginations.

Ordinary streets are no more fit for play than the playgrounds would be if shorn of all equipment. Moreover, in these days, we refuse to consider a playground adequate unless it has, in addition to its equipment, a carefully trained supervisor with a capacity for organizing play. Streets lack equipment, supervision and organization. Street life stands for disorganization.

Its effects on habit are well suggested in the pathetic confession of many a mother: "Well, what can you expect from a street loafer?" This street loafer is none other than the boy who began his life career without play and ended his industrial career with the "sack." His industrial future is best summed up by Joseph Lee, who said that "the boy without a playground is father to the man without a job."

The unbridled freedom of the street is at once its greatest drawback from the standpoint

of the home and its greatest attraction from the standpoint of the child. A boy threatened with trouble at home or in school escapes to the street. Wherever the school spells merely discipline and the home merely punishment, it is fortunate that the boy has the street as a haven of escape. But the streets are often so many roads leading to temptation and danger.

The garish nights in Street-Land appeal strongly to the imagination of children and young people who are bottled up during most of the daylight hours in home or school, factory or store. There are many things which contribute to the allurements of night life: the gay crowds, the bright lights, the rollicking-frolicking music from the "movies," saloons and hurdy-gurdies on all sides with their crude, cheap imitations of better things.

These are indeed a powerful argument for the necessity of satisfying children's inborn hunger for rhythm and motion. A music school always flourishes in a crowded neighborhood. The home above the poverty line is con-

sidered incomplete unless it has a piano. The hurdy-gurdy is a piano on the move. Its music is "classy" to those below the poverty line. As things are now, the street certainly has more music, good and bad, than the average tenement home.

One of the most delightful night scenes is a serenading band of young Italians with guitars and mandolins. It is a treat in a neighborhood like the North End of Boston to catch the strains of Santa Lucia at midnight.

Nothing is more picturesque than the frequent attempts on the part of various nationalities, each in its own manner, to give to the American street a native setting. Color, music and light are the magic by which this is accomplished. Large pennants of purple and gold decorate windows and fire escapes. Stone and brick and wood are for once hidden beneath multicolored drapery and flags of many nations. Arches span the streets, illumined with red, white and blue lights. Procession follows procession.

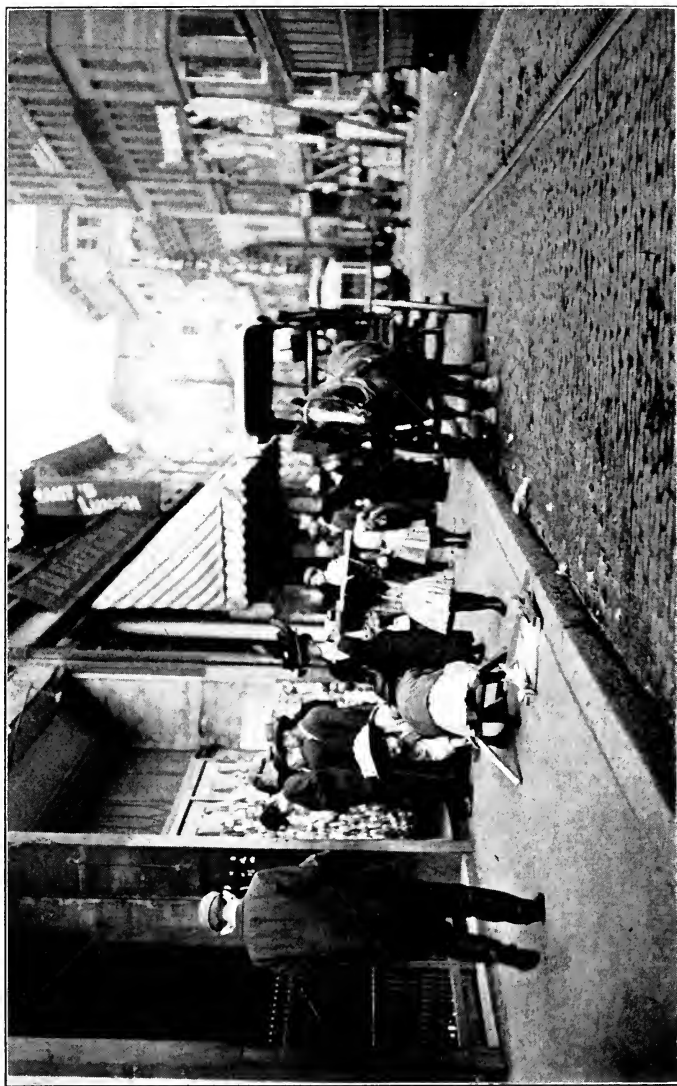
These fairyland aspects of the street, all too rare, obviously charm and delight the children, challenging the best that is in them. Juvenile misdoings amount to nothing on Italian Saints' days because of better things to do. One of the stirring street scenes is the annual procession of thousands of children dressed in white under the banners of the total abstinence societies. In this way, the Catholic Church rouses the parents of the land to a sense of shame for yielding to momentary temptation, and thus renders great service to the State as well as the child, who generally bears the burden of this parental sin.

Street children are intensely interested in politics. The street is the battleground of the most bitterly fought elections; and children always fight out the issues on their own account just as they fight out all other issues quite independent of adult decisions. Harvard and Yale football controversies, for example, are never settled unless they are settled—right—by boys on the street.

Street children thus reflect all that is vital for the time being in the life of the community. They mirror the good as well as the bad. When Peter Pan comes to town, an epidemic of flying spreads with lightning rapidity through the streets to the remotest blind alleys and imagination is once more enthroned. On the other hand, brutality crops out on every street corner whenever a Jack Johnson battles with some forlorn white hope. At such times let the peddler beware of the budding white hopes born and bred in Street-Land.

The street also hums with activities which are anything but fun. Child labor in some of its worst forms still prevails in Street-Land. The newsboys, bootblacks and peddlers are not only better known, but are better off, perhaps, than the wood-gatherers, coal-pickers and market boys. The latter types of street workers are not even mentioned in some of our best child labor legislation.

In spite of enormous handicaps, the play life of Street-Land, like its work program, is



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## Little Woodpickers





varied, though too often abortive. The most popular games are those which require least space; craps and marbles, for instance. Peggy, which has a touch of baseball in it and which, therefore, appeals strongly to boy nature, is unfortunately "squelched" before the boys have a chance to warm up. Top time is very spectacular. Hoop-rolling comes and goes every season like the city snow. Rope-jumping is always discouraging because it is sure to be interrupted by an express wagon.

The frequent changes of the street surface without warning utterly eliminate many kinds of play dear to the hearts of children. Like the sudden introduction of new machinery in industry, the adjustment is painful. Yet the children, unlike the workers, get no sympathy at all,—perhaps because they do not strike or protest in adult fashion. When the face of the street was unpaved, think what it meant to children in dry as well as rainy weather. With the change to asphalt mudpie-making disappeared from Street-Land. Though the

change made roller-skating possible, it has by no means compensated the children for the loss. Bicycling, on the contrary, even on bare rims instead of pumped tires, has become a pleasure instead of a punishment.

The present block system, with the side-to-side and back-to-back arrangement of the tenements, has pre-empted the nooks and corners where children were wont to play teacher and like games which take little room. They still persist, however, on roofs and in alleys. Playing statue is frequent among the recent graduates of the kindergarten, especially among the girls. Girls still try to dance on the street to the tune of the hurdy-gurdy; but this sort of thing is more and more discouraged by the crowds and the traffic. So, in the end, they fall back on playing house in the hall or just sitting still on the doorstep.

The saddest thing about street games is that they end so abruptly. Many are begun but few are finished. Children have little opportunity to lose themselves in a game; their en-

thusiasm is checked suddenly by circumstances and obstacles which they cannot overcome. The effect on youth is disastrous. It means premature discouragement instead of the sense of power which comes with the execution of definite plans. And woe to the street children who become so absorbed in their plans or play that they forget their surroundings or lose their wits. Many an accident is due to the abandon of street play in the midst of such ever-present dangers as the trolley car, the automobile and the numerous other death-dealing agencies of traffic.

Yet the physical hazards, as we shall see, are less serious than the moral dangers lurking in the street.

Certain street games are but gambling games in embryo. The connection between games and gaming is best illustrated by gang activities; some of which are as legitimate as those of the best club in a settlement, while others are a menace to both life and property. Between the two extremes lies a range of gang

activities which are very much like the acts of savagery and barbarism. Yet they have in them the germs of civilization, provided they are properly directed, organized and supervised. The best of them mean the organic education of the members of the gang. Street fights, when not inspired by blind prejudice or race hatred, are as worth while as the tug-of-war at a picnic.

The Boston Common is very frequently the battleground between the West-Enders and the South-Enders, both of whom respectively resist invasion. These battles have a serious ending once in a while, and should be watched by some one who is apparently not looking. But the cause of invasion is as important for the boys to settle as any tribal issue ever was.

These city feuds grow in volume and intensity during the long vacation period. Indeed, all street vices as well as virtues are enormously aggravated in the summer season, when the days are long and the organized life of the child is completely suspended. The

school vacation best illustrates the enormous disadvantages under which city children are laboring as contrasted with children in the country.

Though much has been done for city children during the summer, we have made little progress in developing and encouraging wholesome street activities which in any way compare with the farm activities open to country children. College students are eager to get farm work not only to earn their tuition, but to recover from prolonged physical inaction. We all know how much good it does them. What chance has the average school boy or girl of the city, whose physical development is so intense, for a vacation other than on the streets?

We are just beginning to appreciate the function of the street in the physical development of the city child. Our city homes and schools have all but ignored that function. The cramped manner of building our houses and schools proves this. The latent instincts of both race and tribe, like the latent powers

of the individual, are developed largely on the street. The resulting hoodlumism in certain quarters means that this development was either arrested or carried to excess because of a lack of guidance, and this lack is due to the fact that we have thus far refused to see the educational aspects of street life. "The street educates with fatal precision." This is really what we mean when we speak of environment as teacher. Yet up to the present time, we have gone no further than to condemn this environment or, worse still, condemn the boy.

One cannot blame children for disliking school and consequently playing truant. To sit and sit for hours at a stretch is not education but punishment. The normal child "gets nervous being good" all the time. We fail to recognize that school education very frequently finds but surface roots in the minds of children and, therefore, gets wrenched out of place under the least storm or strain; whereas the roots of street education run deep.

Little or no attempt has been made to square

education with the environment of city children. Educators have thus far failed to do so. In the meantime, children are living a three-fold life,—at home, at school, and on the street. Each institution has its own standard of conduct. Slang and swearing, forbidden in school, are the proper thing on the street. The difference in these standards is responsible for many aberrations in child life. It explains, for example, why Eddie, who is always a good boy at home and school, is “such a devil” on the street. It explains, furthermore, why Eddie is so knowing concerning matters of sex hygiene when both the home and the school have been intentionally silent on such matters.

Here is an excellent illustration of how the great controversies of home and school and church are nonchalantly settled by the street, as a matter of course. For a decade, this country has hotly debated the where, when and how of teaching sex hygiene. During this same period, the street has been teaching it at all hours, under all sorts of conditions, to thou-

sands of children regardless of age or sex. Another great controversy which has been raging for years is the question of the vocational versus the cultural motive in education. The street settled the contest long before it was conceived as such. It is the street which stirs a boy's ambition. The common street heroes—the fireman, the conductor and the chauffeur, for example—are his models.

Many illustrations may be offered to show the influence of the street as teacher and counselor of manners and morals. The best example of street influence as a whole may be seen in men like Owen Kildare, who told his story in "My Mamie Rose." In Kildare as a boy, we see the masterpiece of the street. Corner loafing was the beginning and the jail sentence the climax of his tragic youth. The reform schools and jails are full of such types. We cannot further ignore their existence or the street conditions which produce them.

9



## CHAPTER II.

### STREET HAZARDS

*A kite-flying experience — Accidents and adolescence — Street accidents to school children — Trolleyitis — Children versus traffic — "Stop! Look! Listen!" — Teaching street dangers — Bathing in polluted waters — Disease carriers — Danger of city dumps — Corruption of the senses — Examples of manners and morals — Street vices and virtues — Playing boarder — Recreation standards — The Hartford newsgirl — Origin of the gangsters — Relation of street to delinquency.*

OUR neighborhood, one of the most congested districts in the country, was one day horrified beyond words at the sight of a boy of seven falling from the roof of a four-story tenement.

The bereaved family immediately turned its back upon the district never to return; and the neighborhood, conscious of this bitter reproach,

gossiped over the incident for many days. The boy had been trying to fly his kite in the street, his only playground. The tall brick buildings interfered. Then an inspiration came to him. He climbed up the stairs to the roof. The wind immediately took the kite. He felt the pull as Franklin must have felt the electric quiver. Running back to pay out more line, he misjudged his distance—and paid with his life.

Such accidents are common in city life. The real causes are not generally understood by the tenement dwellers. This boy had arrived at the age when children begin to lead a life of their own outside of home and school. Spontaneous activities, we are told, develop and multiply rapidly during this period of pre-adolescence. We have mislabeled it the "school period," showing our own misunderstanding of its true significance. The motor development of the child during these years is far greater than its mental development. Unfortunately we have exaggerated the latter.

The desire to move about, to do things, to feel the push and pull of Nature's forces; the thirst for adventure, for discovery, for pioneering, for taking chances,—these are the strongest characteristics of this age.

These activities of pre-adolescent youth, it is suggested, correspond to those of the pre-adolescent period of the race which the child is unconsciously recapitulating in its own career. Street environment, however, seems more hazardous, in many respects, than was the outdoor setting of race adolescence. Hence the fatalities among children of this age.

In 1910 the Boston School Board appointed a committee of school principals to study and report on street accidents among school children. More than eighteen hundred accidents were reported in one year. The largest number of sufferers were children seven to thirteen years of age. It is significant that these ages practically correspond with those of juvenile offenders. City hospital records also show that a majority of children who are the

victims of street accidents are of the same tender years. One-half the number of these accidents were due to trolley cars. A large number resulted from falls. Stealing rides on the way to and from school was set down as the greatest source of danger.

It is worse than a danger. Some one called it a disease, "trolleyitis," which is constantly threatening the lives of city children. It is highly contagious and is almost wholly confined to boys. During vacation time, especially, it is responsible for many deaths and for many more cripples.

I recall a boy who was in the hospital for many months as the result of a serious accident. He tried to steal a ride on a trolley car but was driven off by the conductor when the car stopped. Then he jumped on a wagon in front of the car only to be whipped off by the driver. He fell and was run over by the fender of the approaching car.

It is quite natural for children to take chances regardless of how many come to grief.

Indeed, the greater the risk, the more it satisfies certain children's unconscious call for acts of daring and courage. I remember discovering two boys swinging from telephone wires in a perfect abandon suggestive of baby orang-outangs.

"You may be electrocuted," I said.

"That's what we want," one of them answered grandly.

Fortunately the wires proved to be dead.

I have never seen a danger sign which failed to attract a number of children. Looping the Loop is popular because of the dangerous precipices and slides it affords. Boys often deliberately invite danger merely to see what will happen. I remember one boy who seriously tampered with a switch and then hid in a hallway to see what would happen to the next trolley car that passed. The car was almost wrecked, much to his delight.

Many fatalities are due to the conflicting uses commonly made of the street both as a thoroughfare and as a children's playground.

Unquestionably the automobile and the street car constitute the most destructive agencies in Street-Land. Reckless driving by intoxicated chauffeurs and joy-riders is responsible for many accidents. The North End mother's last warning to Angelo is "Look out for the automobile," which is familiarly called the "devil." The schoolboy's latest definition of a pedestrian—"one who is run over by an automobile"—is the final word on the subject.

There is great difficulty in placing the responsibility for street accidents. Automobile owners and pedestrians mutually complain against each other.

In European cities, it is the pedestrian who is arrested if he is run over. The charge is that he crossed the street in a manner contrary to traffic regulations. Originally traffic ordinances in some European capitals were passed for the protection of the crown and the nobility. The man on foot who impeded the royal carriage was deemed an anarchist or Nihilist. Thus the right of way was vested in the few

who rode while the rest of the world halted to see them pass.

These regulations have outlived the theory underlying their origin. Automobile owners insist that it is to the best interest of pedestrians that similar regulations be uniformly adopted in this country. They argue that, even in a democracy, people have no right to commit suicide on the street. It is distinctly criminal to permit children to cross and recross busy thoroughfares unattended by adults or unguarded by police officers.

The Children's Committee of the Federation of Women's Clubs visited the North End of Boston to look into the conditions of children on streets and playgrounds. Desiring to cover as much ground as possible, they used an automobile which was very carefully driven. Yet, during the half-hour spent in the district, two children had narrow escapes, while one child was knocked down. The committee thus rediscovered the relation between streets and accidents.

In a district of thirty-four thousand inhabitants crowded onto sixty acres with but one breathing spot, one hundred by two hundred feet, the streets are necessarily the only playground for the majority of the children. Using the same streets as thoroughfares makes accidents absolutely inevitable. The right of the children of such districts to a residential zone reasonably restricted as to traffic is at least as patent as the right of traffic itself to the main thoroughfares.

On the other hand, it is essential to the protection of traffic as well as children that the latter keep out of the main thoroughfares as much as possible. They should be taught that the highways are intended primarily for vehicles; that pedestrians must keep on the sidewalk; that people have a right to cross in safety, but only at regular crossings and preferably on motion from the traffic officer; and that they must never cross the street or step off a car without remembering to "stop! look! listen!" These provisions should form a part



of every street code and should be posted in conspicuous places. Parents, teachers and street matrons, as well as police officers, should be held responsible for their enforcement.

The Committee of Boston School Principals found the existing ordinances insufficient to hold parents responsible and, therefore, recommended that the School Board endeavor to secure such legislation as would increase parental responsibility. They also recommended greater police vigilance.

The Police Commissioner attributed street accidents to juvenile lawlessness, "the most difficult problem with which the police have to deal" and one that "threatens the greatest danger to the future of the community."

The Commissioner obviously intended to make clear the real issue involved. While the enforcement of traffic regulations is strictly a matter for the police, the prevention of street accidents is a social problem. It calls for the co-operation of all the child-saving forces in the community. Wherever teachers, parents

and the police systematically co-operate with street-car companies, an immediate reduction in the number of street accidents is noticeable.

The Committee of Boston School Principals especially recommended that each school principal acquaint himself with the special danger points in his district and tell the children about them. For example, children should be warned to "keep off" ice ponds not known to be safe.

The annual toll from drownings is so large as to make some people fatalists. The ancient superstition that each year claims its fixed number of victims is by no means waning.

Many waters are dangerous in other ways. Polluted streams look tempting to children, who are apparently amphibious by nature. Little or no attempt is made by city authorities to render such waters safe for bathing purposes or to condemn them and offer substitutes. The folly of guarding the purity of the municipal water supply for drinking purposes and at the same time allowing hundreds of children

to bathe in waters contaminated by sewers is obvious.

A so-called beach in Boston, officially condemned by the Board of Health for bathing, is nevertheless used every summer under the supervision of the Bath Department. The older boys of the neighborhood, remembering what the beach meant to them in earlier days and suspecting its present condition, took some samples of the water to the Board of Health for analysis. Having learned that the water was not fit for bathing, they immediately organized an energetic campaign for a better beach and playground. Their plans, however, were frustrated by the incoming Mayor pledged to give the city an economy administration.

There is much work awaiting the social sanitarian before even the obvious physical hazards of the street are removed. We are just beginning to realize that congested districts, sunless streets, dirty homes and decaying food are not merely matters of inconvenience and discomfort, but of life and death,

"Insanitary conditions," says Dr. Walter S. Cornell, an authority on the health of school children, "probably increase germ virulence, although the numerous germs present in dirty houses and filthy puddles are dangerous to human kind principally because of their greater number. However, when we remember that sunlight is the greatest agent in the destruction of germs we realize that lack of it is at least relatively a condition favoring germ life and activity." Moreover, lack of sleep and exhaustion, common among city children, causes a loss of vitality which makes them all the more susceptible to some of these disease germs.

Diphtheria and tuberculosis are spread by germs which lodge in clothing and food. There is, therefore, the risk of becoming infected on the street by children in latent stages of these diseases. Of the eight thousand one hundred and eighteen cultures taken from school children in the Brighton district of Boston, one hundred and two contained diphtheria bacilli. These diphtheria "carriers" were



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

Mumps Circulating



probable sources of contagion to the thousands of other children of the district. Medical inspection, the harbinger of a healthier people, is becoming increasingly more effective in apprehending both infectious and contagious diseases of school children.

Sending such cases from school, however, does not always prevent infected children from spreading disease. Measles and scarlet fever are frequently caught from children whom the school doctor, having discovered early signs of illness, sore throat or rash, for example, sent home. These children do not always go home nor do they stay at home when they get there. Parents, through ignorance or carelessness, actually send them down onto the street to play. Thus the disease may be communicated to the many little ones below school age who people the streets at all hours.

Human contact on city streets is one of the great enemies to the health of the child. It may well be that the human frame is "built like an armor against disease," but even a splint

may do much damage once it enters. Little Charley, the wood-gatherer, was laid up for months with a swollen foot due to an undiscovered splinter. In our efforts to combat disease, we overlook the street almost entirely. We take the utmost precautions to heal the child while in the hospital. We then send him home to convalesce. The home, in turn, too often sends him out into the street, thus exposing both convalescent and his playmates.

Another source of danger lies in the candies and other foods which children eat on the street. The foodstuffs which enter the home are more or less safeguarded and inspected. Those which are sold by street vendors are not even listed in the government reports. The many kinds of pickles on which children feed are not nearly so dangerous as the molasses kisses, chewing gum, many-colored lollipops and hokey-pokey offerings which are often sold at the very gates of the school.

These untoward conditions doubtless account for the fact that the little folk of the



congested districts appear physically inferior to those of the suburbs. I recall an afternoon visit to two schools, one in the North End and the other in Dorchester. In each school, the graduating class was asked to stand. The Dorchester boys and girls very clearly measured a head taller, on an average, than the North End class. In fact, they looked altogether finer specimens of manhood and womanhood. With due allowance for race differences, the contrast was nevertheless suggestive.

Certain conditions militating against child welfare are largely within the control of parents but are too often neglected by them. But what of such conditions as are found on city dumps? These are, in a sense, maintained by the community as a whole, the same corporate agency that maintains schools and playgrounds. If our germ theory is no fiction, the city dump, in its very nature, is a most effective germ-culture bed and disease-breeder.

In many cities there are more dumps than

playgrounds; and these dumps are frequently more conveniently located for the children of the congested districts. The large variety of tin cans and other articles which the ragman will not buy and the garbage man will not take without a tip or a drink make fine playthings in the eyes of city children. Many children make a business of picking over dumps for rags, bottles and junk which they sell to ragmen; or of searching for coal, wood and other things to take home. It is estimated that in Boston alone, more than five hundred children engage in this work. The danger to health is obvious, considering the dust that is raised and the possible infection from the things which the scavengers are constantly handling.

I have often seen little fellows hitched to carts in front of a schoolhouse, as eager to be off as spirited fire-horses. At the sound of the dismissal bell, the older boys rush out, whip up these "horsies" and dash off at a gallop for their happy hunting ground, the dump. What



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## Children of the Dumps



effect has such a trip on children who have just concluded a nature lesson in school? Few educators are seriously facing this issue.

During the past two decades, we have witnessed the apparent breakdown of the senses of the city child. Eyeglasses are now quite as common among school children as adenoids. But what of the subtle corruption of the eye which glasses cannot correct? Remembering how susceptible the child is to impressions—how dependent for its ideas upon the senses—contrast the effect of an afternoon in an alley with an afternoon in a hayfield. Consider also the nature of a city child's daily sense experiences on the streets and alleys. Through eye and ear he gets a host of impressions,—disorganized, irrelevant and trivial.

Sights and sounds in Street-Land are foreign to ideal childhood. Beauty is everywhere suppressed. Birds and flowers are mere spelling words to many city children. Dull and loud colors blur each other. Wild noises fill the air. The cries of the ice-

man vie with those of the fruit peddler. We think children get accustomed to these things without realizing that the inevitable effect on them is distraction. While the sound of the cricket in the country often annoys them, the screeching of "L" trains at midnight apparently does not disturb their sleep. This only demonstrates what happens to the senses when subjected to the travesties and outrages of city life.

The effect on children is not only physical but moral. All early sights and sounds enter into the very fiber of manhood and womanhood. Physical tastes somehow transform themselves into tastes of a higher order. All physiological experience has ethical meaning. The very breath of the nostrils is the breath of life. Foul and pure air are good and bad from the standpoint of ethics as well as physics. Deny this and you deny the whole theory of environment, the connection between environment and health, and between health and morality. Well-being and right-living are the

same thing expressed in physical and moral terms. Corrupting the senses, the guardians of well-being, is undermining the possibilities of right-living.

Children, like adults, are apparently at their worst on the street. Liberty easily merges into license, which, in turn, too often breeds licentiousness. Bad examples of manners and movements advertise themselves widely and become contagious. "Everybody's Doin' It," the latest expression of mob psychology, is the great democratic sanction of the day.

The cash-girl of the five-and-ten-cent store who shocks the quiet household with her new puffs has only one explanation: "Nicer ladies than me wear them." Unfortunately unsuspecting parents do not know that the "nicer ladies" in question are often "low-down" women who have ceased to work for a living or, worse still, young girls who have never worked. They always dress loudly, evidently to attract attention. Curiously enough, they succeed in attracting those least intended, the

young shop girls who, in that aristocratic presence, find themselves shabby and unlady-like. The ambition "to be a lady," as genuine as it is universal, is thus unfortunately inspired by the worst models. Many a well-meaning girl lands in the reformatory for helping herself to perfume and rouge and other such means of becoming a lady.

These tendencies reveal the difficulty of disentangling the vices from the virtues of the street. The characteristic street girl is "passionately adventurous, eager and unafraid, light of heart and purse and keen on running the gauntlet of the great city." She will risk all for the sake of a popular ideal or fashion. One of the girls at the Civic Service House told in the club of "blowing" herself to a spring hat at the price of two weeks' pay. When taken to task by the club leader, all she said was, "My, but it's nice." She liked to dress "stylish" at all costs. Such an ambition may lead to self-respect and other virtues, but it may also lead to vice.



When Jenny "makes a date" with an unknown <sup>man</sup> ~~sailor~~ on the Common, she is unconsciously playing a social game of consequences. The game may end by her living happily ever afterward. But she may be sent to the "Island," forcing her mother, who never before told a lie, to announce that Jenny has gone on a vacation.

Sex education did not arrive soon enough for Jenny. The State spent five thousand dollars to cure her of truancy, but the reform schools failed to prepare her to avoid the pitfalls of awakening sex impulses. One wonders why the science of arithmetic still has precedence over the science of eugenics, even in the reform-school curriculum. Arithmetic may be exact, but eugenics is more exacting.

It was at recess time, immediately following an arithmetic lesson, that little Mamie, the star member of the ungraded class, played a new game with a select gang in the school basement. As a result, there were a few arrests and extended "vacations." Mamie couldn't see the

difference between playing teacher and playing boarder,—it was all pretending anyhow.

There are enough boarders in the average tenement home to justify the definition given by a newcomer in a class at the Civic Service House. When asked what the border of the United States meant, he said, "That is when a man marries, un' his wife, she take a border."

Certain back streets are completely under the control of corner loafers and hangouts. Many saloons and pool rooms, the loafers' rendezvous at night, are located on residential streets. Children cannot escape their influence. The demoralizing effect of the "drunks" turned out at the eleventh hour is immeasurable, considering the number of children still out at that time of night.

The greatest abuse of the freedom of the street is charged against "college fellows"—genuine and counterfeit—let loose on a Saturday night after a victorious football game. Their lawlessness knows no bounds. The effects of such jubilees are best known to police

officers, who find the youth of their respective beats keen on taking after the "college guy."

The desire for a "good time" is but a thirst for romance, for a little spice in a humdrum life. The dangers which lurk in saloons, picture houses, dance halls and other cheap places of amusement point to the need of higher recreation standards.

Every city should have a comprehensive system of public and private recreation supervised by a recreation board with a superintendent in charge. Such a board should utilize all parks, playgrounds, playfields, schoolhouses, and even streets, for recreation purposes to meet the demands of every element in the community. Such a board should exercise strict censorship over all places of amusement, such as moving pictures, burlesque shows, dance halls, and pool rooms. Without discouraging any legitimate form of private recreation, it should insist on strict enforcement of laws and regulations controlling commercialized amusement,—all the while consciously striving to raise the stand-

ards of both public and private recreation. The maintenance of such a board of recreation is one of the most important functions of every community.

Perhaps the greatest moral hazards to which city children are subjected spring from regular daily contact with street vices while pursuing some street trade. Vending chewing gum or flowers and hustling papers bring many dangers in their wake. The newsgirl who daily fights for her corner opposite the saloon or "Gents' Café" is unwittingly taking greater chances than you would care to have your own child face.

I once asked a Hartford newsgirl how she came to sell papers.

"There's a girl on my street, she call me one day. I asked my mother if I could go. She wouldn't let me. She said in a laughin' way, 'When it snows in summer-time and rains in winter-time, then you can.'

"But last summer, my father got sick. And when the girl call us again—she use' to call

alle time—my mother says, kin' o' cryin', 'Go, children, but be good an' come back soon.'

"We made seven cents apiece the first day. We was green. Now my sister got customers and I got this corner. We make fifteen to twenty cents apiece,—not quite a dollar a week. You see, we dussn't sell Sunday, and we dussn't sell after nine o'clock, and we dussn't sell in saloons."

"What's the most you ever made in one day?" I asked.

"Seventy cents."

"That's when the man gave you fifty cents for a Christmas present," her sister added shyly.

"Does your mother mind your selling papers now?" I asked.

"No, she's use' to it. She wouldn't have no talk about it. We have to sell, my sister an' me, 'cause Papa is still sick and we are a large family, an' there ain't no boys by us 'ceptin' my kid brother what's just got born.

"But look't, Mister, Lena an' Rosa don't

have to sell 'cause their father has a pine (pawn) shop an' lots of jew'lry. I don't mind telling on 'em, 'cause I'm mad on 'em. They block me out every time. They're reg'la' bums. They get dressed somethin' awful. They go round the barrels an' pick out the rag clothes an' put 'em on to look poor, you know. They don' want people to know their father's got a jew'lry store."

"What makes them sell?" I asked.

"Their father an' mother makes them. They're reg'la' *schnorers*. Their father is fat an' their mother is fat, but they're so skinny, like *anythin'*. An' when they get a cent, they put it way down in their stockin's an' sleep in 'em."

All our juvenile delinquency codes first condemn street influences. Then they attempt to save the children from them by mere fiat. But you cannot tolerate a vice-breeding saloon and then forbid youth to enter. You may as well shake your finger at the devil. It is too much

to ask our children to live down such paradoxes.

Juvenile delinquents usually come from the ranks of street children who have been seeking fun and adventure and have found to their great sorrow that play is no longer their unrestricted privilege. The Recreation Survey of Providence, Rhode Island, revealed that many boys, "in satisfying their natural desire to play, have to be trespassers on private property or law-breakers in the streets."

The Child Welfare Exhibit in New York showed that in July, 1909, over three hundred and fifty children were arrested for playing games on the street, for baseball as well as craps. Shooting craps, pitching pennies, playing cards in doorways, are not vicious in themselves; but eventually they lead to the juvenile court and even beyond.

It is curious to find that many restrictions imposed on play are responsible for as many forms of juvenile delinquency. There are

times when a baseball game on the street becomes irresistible in spite of the fact that it is "agin the law." Every "don't" restricting play necessarily means broken rules and broken hearts.

Immigrant children, ignorant of the laws of the land, are most likely to break them. Too often their parents suffer the consequences. A court summons—"in the name of the COMMONWEALTH to answer to a complaint"—may be merely a matter of form to some, but to an immigrant mother it comes like a shock.

The child who transgresses should not be misunderstood. The boy himself is not always to be blamed. Neither are his parents. A study of street gangs makes clear their influence on delinquency.

The East-Side gangsters—Gyp the Blood, Leftie Louie, and the rest of the band—might all have turned out Rabbis if they had remained in their native land. It was the new environment that undid them. The synagogues that the fathers of these notorious gangsters built





Ball 128 Arrests.



Cat 177 Arrests



Craps 23 Arrests

717 Children Arrested in One Month.  
Which

Shall Children Cease Playing ?

— Shall the Law be Modified ?

Shall we provide more play space ?

Over half the arrests were for playing games.



Begging Transfers 12 Arrests



Peddling 92 Arrests

*The New York Child Welfare Committee*

Street Arrests



were planted in the midst of open vice protected by the police. The children were reared in the shadow of this "red-light" district. Their pious parents counted on Heredity to counteract the influence of Environment.

To what extent the fall of the gangsters was due to environment is well disclosed in their biographies.

One of the gangsters as a lad helped his father behind the bar of his saloon. The new friends he made there interested him more than school. The gang he joined taught him how to "play hookey." Frequent punishments both at home and at school, far from breaking him of his habits, only strengthened them. He often ran away to escape the rod and at length disappeared for a number of years. When he came back, he brought with him police protection. He established an illicit distillery which brought him riches and, eventually, ruin.

Benny Snyder, self-confessed murderer of Pinchey Paul, was the victim of similar influences. His confession, one of the most re-

markable human documents ever filed in the District Attorney's office in New York, reveals how he and his gang made their living by "beating up" scabs at so much *per diem*. Knifing a man or "bumping him over the head with a pipe" were only casual incidents in a day's work; and "although murder is something to make the pulse of the novice beat faster, one soon got over that."

Benny told his story very simply:

"I was always a fellow that had been knocking around. So a lot of them bakers got a liking to me, and one time they were supposed to take a shop from the bakers, so they took me along. . . . When I got down there they said they had some work for me. . . . So they got a liking to me when they seen that I was good for it; that I stick. So everybody got me."

This was the beginning of Benny's experience as a gunman. The final verdict in his case was manslaughter in the first degree. His reward will be many years' imprisonment.

Federal investigations of conditions of women and child wage-earners in the country show that a large majority of delinquent cases come from "fair and good homes." Judge Lindsey therefore reminds us that the "influence of the home is by no means the only one under which a child is placed, especially in that kind of city life which has come to this country in the past fifty years." He says, further, that the city is "furnishing, in many respects, a new environment under which most of our children are to be reared."

This new environment is revolutionizing the lives of the children before our very eyes. Yet we make no serious effort to get it under social control. We have just seen that this environment is so full of danger that nearly every accident cited is entirely predictable. Why then wait until the accumulated results reach a crisis? For years, the situation abroad was such that the great war was entirely predictable and preventable. So are street accidents.

## CHAPTER III

### NIGHT CHILDREN

*Tommie's discovery — Night birds — The midnight fire — "Rough-house" gangs — Petty pilfering — "Bunking out" — Coupon collectors — The morning after — Food scavengers — Tricks of the trade — Begging — Street vaudeville — Moneyitis — The lure of the cheap show — Pre-election nights — The spell of downtown — "Watchman, what of the night?" — Election extras — Milkmen's helpers — Effects of night life — Uniform delinquency laws — Street Mothers — The curfew — The ash-barrel gang — Program for older children.*

TOMMIE is the son of a New England schoolmaster, one of those rare schoolmasters who prefers living "down there" in the heart of his bailiwick. Like his parents, Tommie was taught from infancy to retire soon after sundown.

One evening, while in his "nightie" and in the midst of his prayers, he heard the fire

alarm. He ran excitedly into the front-room, flung the window open—just in time to catch sight of the fleeting shadows of little children running madly behind a clanging, hissing fire-engine.

“Mama,” he asked in great surprise, “are these the night children?”

“Night children”—these words are extremely suggestive. Did you ever hear of night birds? There are owls, to be sure. Those on the Boston Common, known to sight-seers the country over, are as cosmopolitan by nature as our city children. But their reputation is rather low in birdland. Their reputed wisdom is of a doubtful sort, mostly derived from a knowledge of things which well-bred babes of birdland close their eyes to before nightfall. Nevertheless the owl, in its nocturnal habits and dark wisdom, strikingly resembles the “wise guy” of Street-Land. The alarming thing about city children is that they are becoming more and more owlsh.

In 1910 Boston had a million-dollar fire

which raged all night. I was amazed at the immense crowds of children that turned out to see it. They came from every section of the city—these little fire-worshipers—in response to the general alarm. One could see them chasing breathlessly after their home fire-engines as if their own property were in danger. They overran all the streets and alleys in the district, frequently attempting to break through the danger lines. They were everywhere: on wagons, on cars, on the "L," on telephone and telegraph poles, on water spouts, on housetops, perched high up on water tanks, astride on fences and billboards. Little girls and boys, veritable Lilliputians, were bobbing about dodging fire-engines, patrol wagons and trolleys.

Clouds of smoke hung low and heavy over the entire neighborhood. The engines spat fire. Sparks flew in all directions and fell like hail on the heads of the vast crowd of men, women and children. It was a strange setting for children miles from home late at night.



What kept them there? Some were spell-bound, awed by the scene and the excitement; the fire, the engines, the crowds held them. Others hooted and tooted, interchanged signals, issued orders, shouted "look out," "move quickly"—often in mockery of the fire chiefs, more often in dead earnest. Many, in the spirit of true Boy Scouts, seemed anxious to help, but were denied the chance.

The newsboys, always the most conspicuous citizens of Street-Land, were there. As usual, they were out for business and were trying to make the most of their opportunity. Laws and ordinances were flung to the winds. Everybody was selling papers—boys and girls, young and old. Any attempt to stop them would have required the entire police force.

Messenger boys ran about with an air of profound importance, their badges and caps seeming to confer special privileges on them wherever they went.

Certain gangs were obviously out for mischief or, to put it in their own words, for

“rough-house.” They hopped on cars, jumped on and off patrol wagons, dashed after fire-engines, honk-honked automobile horns, screamed and howled—behaving altogether like a menagerie let loose. They shifted with the crowds, always ahead of them,—bent on being first everywhere.

Other gangs were out for more than mere mischief. They were looking for business, pilfering on the quiet. I saw one boy running toward the scene of action as though he had almost missed his chance. This parasitic class of boys always turns out on such occasions and preys on other boys just as the light-fingered gentry prey on their fellow men.

As the night wore on, one boy complained of missing a bundle of papers; another boy wept on account of a badge that had been “swiped” from him; still another boy was short of change.

The favorite trick on a night like this is to watch for the opportune moment, when a boy is making change, and then strike his hand.

Immediately there is a scramble for the spoils. Another diversion on such occasions is the "poco" game. This fine art leaves women minus their money and often their pocketbooks as well.

These pilfering gangs are quite common in Street-Land almost every night, though "business" is best on such occasions as a fire or a holiday or after a football game.

Petty thieves, the largest group of night children, are a real social menace. An English prison commission, commenting upon the sixteen thousand lads under its care, says that petty larceny is the basis of professional crime, the bane and puzzle and "the social problem of this as well as all other civilized countries."

The commission adds: "It is a sad and significant fact that forty per cent. of these particular offenses (larceny) are committed by young persons under the age of twenty-one."

The variety of forms which stealing takes among street children may be judged from the docket of any juvenile court. At least a score

of indictable acts of larceny are commonly mentioned,—such as “petty larceny,” “grand larceny,” “larceny from person” and “larceny from common carrier.” “Breaking and entering in order to steal” is especially done at night, and is the standing grievance of the uninsured small shop-keeper.

This is best illustrated by the familiar story of the German grocer who came to ask the police captain the meaning of “Cheese it de cop.” “Every time I miss someding from off die vindow,” he exclaimed, “I hear die boys says, ‘Cheese it de cop,’ and off dey go.”

Other types of night children are in evidence on different occasions. For example, there is the “bunk,” the boy who is either chased out or has of his own accord run away from home—too often the Home of the Big Thirst. The knockabout frequents the Common in summer. In winter, he generally sleeps in the warm entry of a large building.

At three o'clock one winter morning, I found three East Boston boys fast asleep on the grate



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

Bunking Out for the Night



over one of the ventilators of the Post-Office building. The warm air coming up through the grate melted the snow as fast as it fell and kept that corner dry, while the sidewalk showed at least a two-inch fall. I was interested to find what kind of air came through the grate. I feared it was foul.

"Oh no," said the engineer assuringly, "this air won't hurt them,—just a little hot air from the boiler rooms. You see it's pretty hot there. This here grate helps us get rid of some of the heat."

I asked whether boys often slept there.

"Yes," he said, "on cold and snowy nights. It keeps them warm."

I was also interested to know the reasons why these boys bunked out. I learned that the two younger boys were entirely under the influence of the older one. They "kept company" with him all the time. He came from a good American home, an only child of thirteen. His father was a fireman on the night shift. For months, regularly at nine

o'clock at night, Edward had brought him his dinner pail. His mother, a little woman always feeling "poorly," would generally retire early, leaving the door open. She was satisfied with the usual injunction: "Now, Ed, don't be late, and be sure you lock the door."

Ed locked the door—every night a little later. The fascination of night life, especially when the gay theater crowds came out, held him. Now and then he slept out. Before his mother was aware of it, bunking out had become a habit.

There are boys in every city who ply a peculiar trade well on toward midnight. These boys are looking for tobacco coupons and cigarette pictures. They lie in wait for customers leaving cigar stores and inquire of each one, "Mister, got a pitchur?"

The coupons have a decided market value. A given number will secure a prize article—a safety razor or a pocket book, for example. Lists of these articles are published by the Tobacco Trust and widely distributed free.



They are veritable traps for the young. I found that this literature was more eagerly read by boys than that of the Anti-Cigarette League.

The Trust evidently knows boys. It certainly could not have made a stronger appeal to the idealism in the boy than by these two means of advertising—the coupon-saving scheme and the picture series. The pictures are of the most popular baseball players and pugilists in the world, heroes of Street-Land, and are diligently collected even by the best-behaved children. In fact, they are bartered, sold, gambled for and treasured like gold or “buttons.”

This class of goods is tabooed in the classroom. Some teachers reserve drawers for such confiscated articles. “I need a trunk these days,” said one teacher, distressed by the growth of this craze for “pitchurs and coupons.”

Some children specialize in street-car transfers, which they get for nothing and sell for

whatever is obtainable. They are always loitering about transfer stations and entrances to the subway and the Elevated.

Then there are the food scavengers. Tim and Willie, for example, went marketing every night and generally returned with bags full of foodstuffs which were consumed in the home. They freely ate the things they picked up, but they seemed more stuffed than fed. Although they are now thirteen and eleven respectively and were born in this country, they are still in the elementary grades.

Nevertheless their father is proud of them because they materially helped to pay for the property which he owns. Although he is still "land-poor," in the sense that his equity in the property is insignificant, he has already stopped working at the age of forty-five. His sons are sure to "knock off" at an even earlier age because they began much younger. But it is a puzzle in vocational guidance as to just what their life work will be.

Food scavenging is a typical "blind-alley" occupation because actually pursued in blind alleys. Its nature and hazards are such as to discourage any but those in dire need or forced into it through parental greed. The food scavenger is always ahead of the street cleaner. He helps materially to clean up the market on Saturday nights and on nights preceding holidays. Those are, in the language of the market man, his "red-letter" nights. All the refuse of the pushcart, fruit-stand and grocery wagon is welcome. Specked fruit, tomatoes and cucumbers are either devoured on the spot or taken home. Chicken heads, pigs' feet, and the like, are regarded as spoils of war worth scrambling for every Saturday night.

Food scavengers are mostly Italian and Polish boys, all of them too young to engage in more profitable employment. They knock about the market with their priceless pickings stored away in the dirty canvas bags slung over their shoulders. During the day and the

early part of the evening, there is very little legitimate business and they are frequently reduced to stealing.

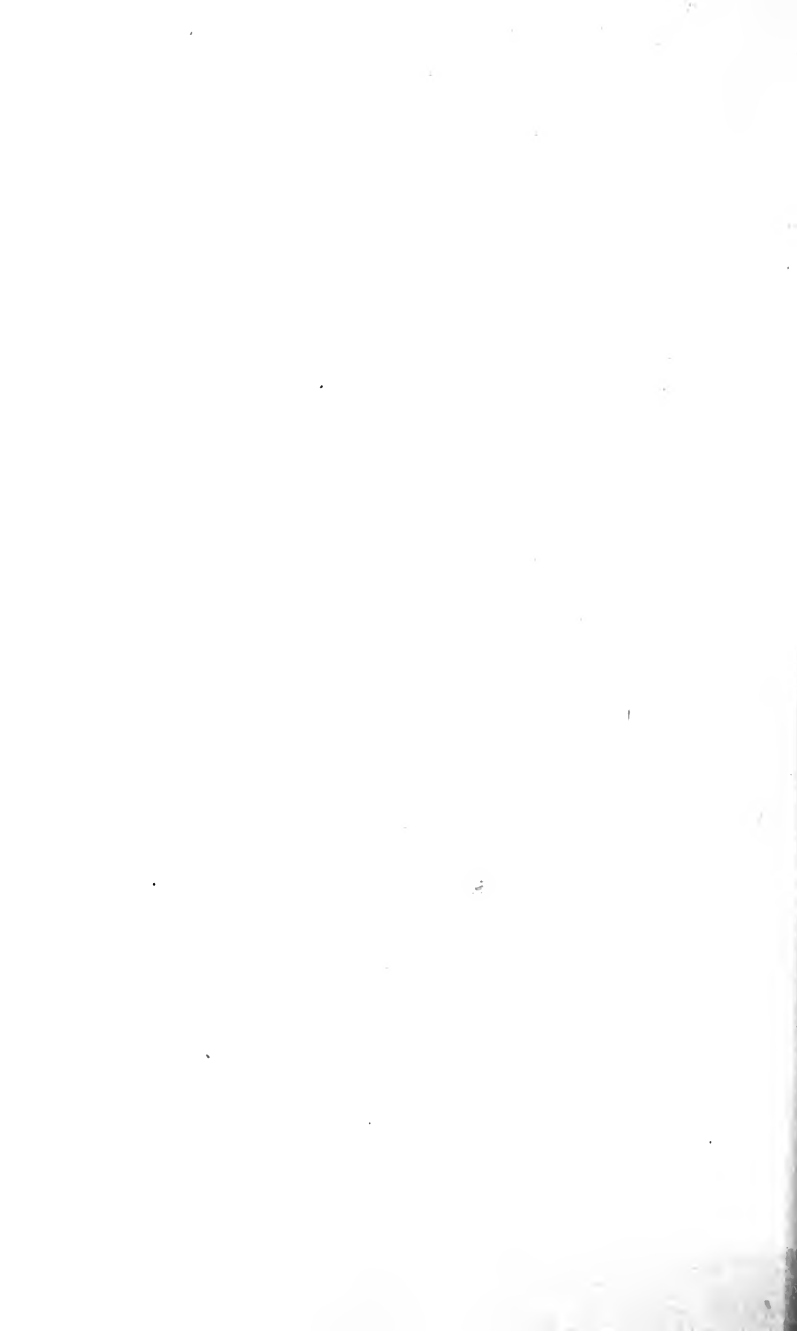
There are more tricks in this trade than you may imagine. "Stalls" are very common. One boy acts the part of a beggar, engaging the attention of the stand-keeper while the others run away with the "dope" from the rear. A "row" is always effective. The idea is to "start something." The pushcart man, a "greenhorn," cannot bear to see the boys pummel each other and earnestly tries to part them. The boys then turn upon him and, in the mêlée, the leaders make away with the spoils.

Street boys, as a rule, have little use for their sisters; but when scavenging, sisters can help "a lot." At eleven o'clock when the market is closing, you may see dozens of children busy as ants, loading, lifting and lugging bagfuls of "stuff" which would hardly pass the test of the Pure Food Inspector. No one has yet measured the amount of harm which these foods, as



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

**Willie, the Food Scavenger**



well as the scavenging, are doing to these children and their families.

Snatching from passing teams is also popular, especially in back streets in the dark. This demonstrates Stevenson's doctrine that a given setting almost irresistibly invites its special kind of law-breaking. The theory seems to be that he who runs may steal; that is, provided he can catch up with the team. Bananas and coal are most easily stolen. The simplest scheme is for one boy to get on the wagon in the rear and drop the bananas along the way just as the fox in the fable dropped the fish. His pal picks them up.

The pilferer may get a taste of the whip, but that must be put up with as one of the hazards of the profession. "It's all in a day's work," the gang leader tells you philosophically. Often enough, the wagon is too long for the reach of the whip. That is when the situation is both exciting and amusing. The helpless driver "cusses" and scolds in vain. At last he halts

his team ready to jump. But the boy jumps first, of course, and gets away with the fruit.

Begging still persists in Street-Land. "Mister, gimme a penny" is the pathetic plea which comes from under your elbow as you approach the restaurant or the theater, and instinctively your hand goes into your pocket.

Another kind of begging is too much encouraged by tender-hearted evening folk. Well-organized bands make "easy money" by giving vaudeville performances, acrobatic stunts and song-and-dance acts, in the street near theaters, dance halls and wherever there is a chance for a crowd. These troupes are well balanced professionally: the Italian boy is star singer and spellbinder; the Jewish boy acts as comedian at the expense of the Chosen People; and the Irish boy is the somersault professor.

Curiosity draws the crowd. Sympathy combined with real interest holds it through the whole entertainment in spite of previous engagements. This all-star cast performs the monkey dance, the buck-and-wing and the



usual somersaults. Between the acts, come "smart hits" which always take with this audience, "ragtime crazy" like all street folk. "Have a Heart," "My Harem," "It's a Bear," are present-day favorites. It is not unusual to find a teacher delayed by such a refrain:

"Once I played truant just for fun,  
But it really didn't matter, so to speak;  
For I learnt more from Billy on the day we stayed  
away  
Than Teacher could have taught me in a week."

These sophisticated street performers act their parts with great gusto, always ending with an air of satisfaction and expectancy which, in plain language, means a well-deserved tip—a nickel or a dime.

"Aren't they clever?" is the comment of the crowd, unconscious of the waste of it all. A sudden shower of pennies, nickels and dimes from the appreciative spectators pours upon the entertainers as compensation for professional services rendered.

Peter Stone, of "Stone and Ward" fame, al-

most danced his heels off in cellars and on street corners, always in expectancy. He died at the age of twenty-one, just as he was being booked for the Keith Circuit at a salary of one hundred dollars a week. This fact is unknown to his many street admirers, whose excessive doses of pennies brought on acute Moneyitis, the most common street disease.

"Pumpkin pie killed him," his mother insists. To be sure, pumpkin pie isn't "kosher"; but the explanation is too simple.

Going to the movies is the latest craze in Street-Land. Moving pictures are food and drink to most city children. Mere laws cannot keep them away. Neither do considerations of time, place or lack of the wherewithal.

One evening after nine o'clock, I saw a frail boy of eight standing in front of a picture theater in Chinatown craning his neck to see through the transom.

"Are you trying to see the moving pictures?" I asked.

"I *am* seeing them," he answered triumphantly.

To *see* a show is only one degree less wonderful to children than to be *in* a show. The long lines of street folk in front of moving picture and vaudeville houses—all candidates for rush seats—demonstrate the truth of which Thoreau so forcibly reminds us, that the reason why we crave art and drama is because there is something of the artist and the dramatist in us all. The officer who arrested Johnny for breaking a skylight evidently never read Thoreau. Otherwise his charge would have been, not merely window-breaking, but window-breaking with the idea of stealing a "look-in" which the frosted skylight made impossible. Yet what is a boy to do when he hasn't even the price of a rush seat?

Most fortunate are the fourteen-to-sixteen-year-olds who are earning their first wages. They find they have also earned their independence and the right to smoke and chew and

spit like the men with whom they proudly stand in the gallery line.

The boys look tired and restless at the delay which keeps them from the fun to which they are "blowing" themselves. The show is apt to be disappointing as a whole. It was never intended for them and barely represents their money's worth. Nevertheless they revel in the cheap heroics characteristic of most of the dime shows now offered. These burlesque houses are worse than the movies. Their main function evidently is to make "vice attractive" at the matinée and "virtue abominable" in the evening.

Three hours spent in the vitiating air of the gallery destroy, rather than re-create, the energy of working lads. I have seen them file out of the theater pale-faced and exhausted, glad to get a breath of air again. As the audience empties into the street, one immediately notices the foul air rushing out with it. But few of us note the moral atmosphere in which the crowd moves about.

Feasting on a burlesque show meant for "men only," with

"FORTY BURLESQUERS IN THE CAST—FORTY" as the chief attraction, has its come-backs. The reaction on the boys shows itself on the way home. They imitate the "stage drunk" and good-naturedly beat the "kids" on the street after the manner of the villain. They do the clog dance on street corners until the wee hours of the morning just as it was done on the stage.

To appreciate the full significance of this theater-going habit, it is necessary to bear in mind that these theaters are always the cheapest in more than one sense. Located in the worst districts, they attract characteristic "I should worry" crowds. The Bowdoin Square region of Boston, for example, like the Bowery of New York, is noted for its rampant immorality. In such districts are located the most notorious show-houses in the city. Five or six theaters almost next to one another nightly let loose their crowds into the streets.

Conditions are then ripe for mob violence. Many fights and arrests take place. Drunken sailors and bad women bargain in the open. What the boys have seen inside the theater, far from strengthening them against temptations outside, rather whets their interest. I have noticed that many boys linger late in the neighborhood of the theaters waiting for something to happen.

Nearer home, street life at night is much more wholesome, if not so picturesque. Life is more real, more normal. Yet there are gala occasions which serve to stimulate children's imaginations.

I was always especially interested in pre-election nights in Street-Land. Such nights bring out hosts of little citizens, who love parades, torchlights and brass bands fully as much as adult citizens. Indeed they play a more important part in all open-air rallies than their fathers. They not only take sides, but supply most of the enthusiasm (as measured by noise) and set off all the fire-works. The

custom, now waning, of lighting huge bonfires on such nights used to keep many children busy for days gathering wood.

Now that they are denied this form of participation, they hold elections of their own. This game of politics, which is growing in popularity, imitates all the virtues and vices of the real game men play. The boys duplicate all the parties, often drawing lines of sex and color and race just as their elders are in the habit of doing; while groups of girls do the heckling in militant fashion.

On residential streets, children are out late at night for all kinds of legitimate reasons. Some are on errands of love and mercy: to summon the doctor or priest or rabbi. Some are on the way to post-office or grocery. Others are returning from a visit or from work. Settlement and night-school crowds lend special liveliness to the procession.

Legions are lingering on the streets because they wish to hear and see things. They are keen on learning all about Street-Land and de-

terminated to rediscover America in a very real sense. These pioneers, especially the children of the newcomers, wake early and wander about late, attracted and mystified by the wonders of downtown. They are charmed by the window-shows, the street scenes and the hurdy-gurdy music.

Night life is eventful. It brings to youth strange experiences which are out of keeping with its daily life in home and school. It whets new appetites which cannot be satisfied legitimately. The greatest dangers of night life are its excesses. No matter how late at night it was, I always found some children running about, fighting and making noise. They were often in dangerous places, far away from home and behaving altogether after the manner of that latest city breed, the joy-riders.

Where were their parents? Asleep? At work? Drunk? And not another soul to watch over these stray little night folk of Street-Land! No one to ask the Officer of the Night Shift



concerning these children of men, as was asked of old, "Watchman, what of the night?"

I recall one boy who had a fair reputation for conduct, attendance and scholarship in school. But he was in the habit of loitering about railroad stations. One night he was induced to sell election extras until two o'clock. He came home with sixty cents and a severe case of pneumonia which kept him in bed for a month. When he returned to school, he was unable to catch up in his studies; and he soon joined the ranks of the school deserters. His mother cursed election nights instead of blaming herself.

Parents are often largely to blame for such results. To illustrate. Now and then, complaints came to me from teachers that certain boys fell fast asleep on their desks less than half an hour after coming to school in the morning. Investigation showed that these boys worked on milk carts; that their parents waked them at three o'clock in the morning in answer to the customary door knock or whistle;

and that the boys returned home at eight o'clock, often with a quart of milk as the only compensation. A few convictions stopped this practice,—milk-drivers found it unprofitable. The boys' parents, however, went unpunished.

It must be evident that the evil effects of night life are as certain as its challenge is irresistible. In the language of Kingsley's "Water Babies," there are thirty-seven or thirty-nine reasons ("one is not sure which"), against this night wandering.

Night life militates against children's health and growth to a greater extent than has yet been realized. Overstimulation, in place of the sleep and rest which growing children need, tends to undermine even the strongest constitutions. It needs no physiologist to perceive that the ravages of night life help materially to reduce measurements of weight, height and chest, and to weaken hearts, lungs and eyes. Pale faces and languid bearing characterize night children of Street-Land.

Moreover, their education suffers. The habit of burning the midnight oil is generally disapproved of among students. What shall we say of the tendency among city children toward burning the candle at both ends, and to no purpose? Children who are out until midnight must report at school the next morning although tired and mentally dull. The red-eyed member of the ungraded class who stayed for the second show at the movies does not complain of his headache but boasts of his "good time." The seeds of education are consequently sown upon sterile ground.

If, on the other hand, children are tardy or truant, they are entering upon a career which too often ends in the reformatory.

Night life destroys habits of industry. The fresh recruits of the factories not only report in the morning with the "blues," but gradually find themselves unable to do their work with a will—and success. "Walking the bricks" is the inevitable result. Thus industry gives way

to loitering and loafing which become rooted into habit.

It is significant that many of the activities of night children are acts of delinquency under all model juvenile delinquency codes, such as the 1913 law of Ohio. Not only do these laws expressly declare wandering about the streets at night a delinquent act, but they include many related acts,—such as flipping cars, wandering about railroad yards, visiting saloons, pool rooms and billiard rooms, using bad language or cigarettes, visiting penny arcades or moving picture shows where vulgar and indecent pictures are exhibited.

As night comes on, child life in Street-Land assumes strange forms. There are distinct tendencies toward reversion—to the monkey stage, for instance, which takes the form of post-climbing, running on all fours or swinging aimlessly from the iron railings of basement saloons. Often one notices a revival of the life of our Indian predecessors, with all its hooting and tooting and ground-listening.

Street fights and raids echo the days of barbaric struggle. Gangs reach out for supremacy and fight with five-and-ten-cent swords and pistols. Such acts are unchecked by conscience from within or by authority from without. The absence of both inner and outer checks suggests not only the true reason but the remedy.

Chicago, always true to its motto "I will," was the first of the leading cities to appoint a squad of policewomen "to keep young folk off the street late at night." At first, they were considered only for the "red-light" districts; but it was finally decided that streets, parks, and other places of recreation—the rendezvous of young people, especially at night—are even more important. Thus the Police Matron, or Street Mother, is here at last. Her arrival marks the first important step in the working out of a system of street supervision of child life.

Time was when this control was attempted in small towns by means of the so-called cur-

few or bed-time law, generally a nine o'clock ordinance for children under fourteen. Such ordinances are common in smaller cities and towns where, perchance, they can be enforced. But where no machinery for enforcing such regulations is provided, these ordinances generally fail. It is equally true that non-official attempts to enforce purely ethical standards of conduct often fail. In this country, even children are apt to challenge your authority.

An incident will prove this better than argument. On one occasion, I saw a dozen children loitering around a refuse barrel, all scrambling for a chance to dig into its hidden treasures. Neither the barrel nor the environment seemed to me especially desirable for children. I ordered them off, suggesting home as a goal. They backed away ten feet in a straggling line, faced about and eyed me with obvious dissatisfaction. Then the leader, who seemed not older than nine, sized me up for a moment.

"Come on, kids," he then called out defiantly. "He ain't nothin'."

They were certainly within their "rights" even though they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. What every city and town really needs is both a bed-time law and a Street Mother to enforce it.

The most effective enforcement of a curfew law will still leave children under fourteen on the street until nine o'clock and children over fourteen as long as they can or care to remain. There is therefore no danger that the curfew "will entirely dispense with parental authority," as some people imagine. Indeed homes, schools, settlements, churches, and the many other beneficent child-saving agencies, will have to work together better than they ever did before in order to compete successfully with the street both day and night.

These agencies should be reënforced in every State in the Union by a strong delinquency law embodying a curfew provision. Such a law in the hands of a squad of Street Mothers or Protective Agents would go a great way in

keeping off the streets little children away from home after supper-time.

In some cities, school yards, roofs and playgrounds are kept open evenings, weather permitting, for free play under proper supervision. Social settlements, and some kindred institutions, are not only caring for the little folk whose homes fail to render such service for one reason or another, but are courageously setting to work to remove such reasons.

A few cities are doing more than censoring the performances at private moving-picture and vaudeville houses. Such houses, for children as well as adults, are sometimes controlled, if not owned, by the municipality or by the community as a unit. In Germany, for example, before the war, the *Naturtheateren* more than paid expenses. The cast was usually made up of men, women and children from the community.

Our evening schools, in many cases, render the services both of the German continuation schools and the American social centers at



their best. Many of these centers are kept open all the year round and are intelligently adapted to the needs of the changing seasons. These and similar social agencies are learning to provide the means for recreation and amusement so much in demand without the overstimulation always produced by the commercialized houses which serve the same purpose but are designed for profit.

American cities are gradually overcoming their stolid indifference to the many forms of commercialized amusement which take advantage of the innocent desire of youth for fun and a taste of the joy of living. They have discovered that these amusements often lead the young to the "red-light" districts lying just beyond the amusement centers. This tardy recognition of the need of providing wholesome recreation is one of the great indictments made against the city by recent vice commissions. But the very creation of such commissions records a keener social conscience and the dawn of a higher order of city life.

## CHAPTER IV,

### SCHOOL DESERTERS

*School attendance and desertion—Taking after grown-up deserters—How Johnny played truant—Origin of compulsory education laws—Causes of truancy—Attitude of educators fifty years ago—Testimony of truants—The play-boy of Street-Land—Rebellion against school inaction—Truancy no longer criminal—The lesson of the training school—The call of outdoors—School desertion a social problem—Constructive program for combating truancy.*

FOR every child that is graduated from a grammar school, another child drops out, mainly in disgust or despair.

Dr. Luther H. Gulick tells us that about two hundred and fifty thousand children drop out annually as against two hundred and fifty thousand who are graduated. Less than one boy in five completes all the grammar grades. The majority who leave school fail to complete the

sixth grade. A large minority desert school while still in the ungraded classes.

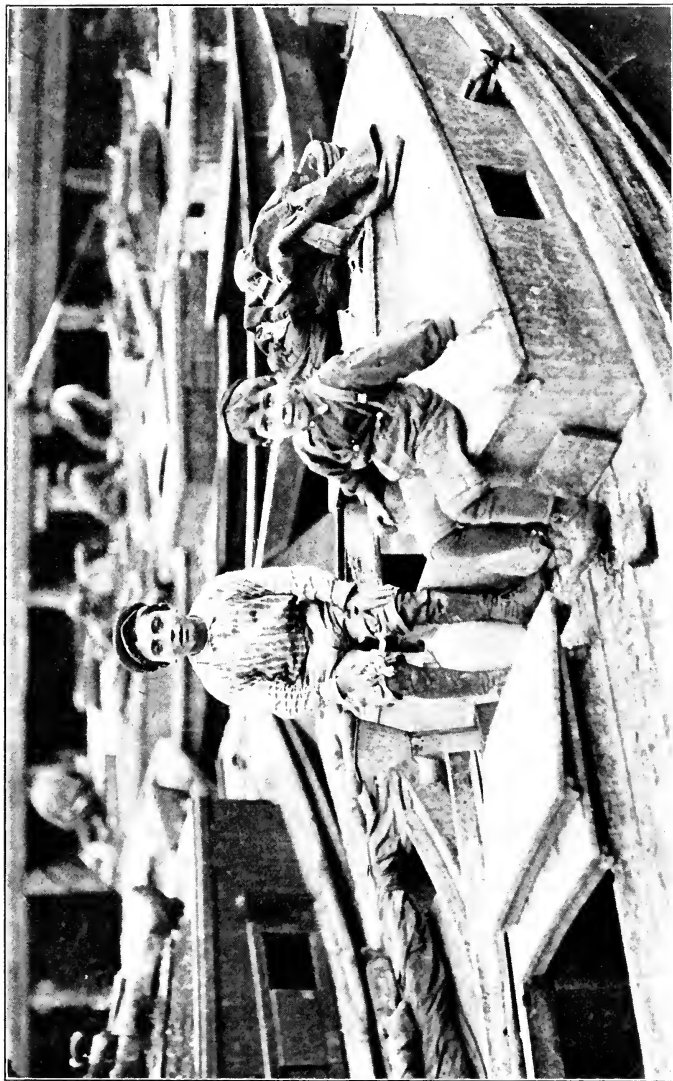
The most serious phase of this wholesale school desertion is truancy, which means staying away from school during the compulsory school period. Truancy, in one sense, is but another form of loafing, and it is quite possible that truants are merely taking after grown-ups. The mother who locks her child in the house and goes off to the movies, only to find her son Johnny there ahead of her, suddenly realizes the truth that the apple does not fall far from the tree. It is customary in such a case to blame the movies, and rightly so.

A moving picture house once put out an alluring sign—"How Johnny Played Truant." The doors opened at two o'clock in the afternoon. I went in and found at least a dozen Johnnies seated in front-row orchestra seats, all eager to learn how Johnny played truant. This information added to their own experiences made their education in the matter almost perfect.

Truancy is a by-product of compulsory education laws. The theory of our American democracy necessarily implies intelligent citizenship. The greatest instrument for raising the general level of intelligence is the public school. Hence our ideal of universal education.

"After God carried us to New England," reads the famous Harvard tablet, "and after we had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity."

This desire had its concrete expression in a law passed as early as 1642, which put a ban on barbarism and ignorance. "Forasmuch as the good education of children is of singular behoof and benefit to any commonwealth, and whereas many parents and masters are too indulgent and negligent of their duty in this kind," the selectmen were ordered by the Gen-



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Truant Officer



eral Court to have a vigilant eye over their "brethren and neighbors to see that none of them shall suffer so much barbarism in any of their families as not to endeavor to teach, by themselves or others, their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue, and knowledge of the capital laws; upon penalty of twenty shillings for every neglected child."

Neither Massachusetts, with her two hundred and fifty years' experience in compulsory education, nor any other State, however progressive, has yet evolved a successful plan for combating truancy. Before this can be accomplished we must learn the reasons why children leave school.

Fifty years ago, Massachusetts educators began to look for causes. Early investigators regarded truancy as a phase of "human depravity." They called it "juvenile depravity." Playing truant was considered a crime. In 1846, when truancy first loomed up as a problem, a learned educator charged parents with

"aiding and abetting their children in this crime." Later investigations placed the blame on parents' poverty, intemperance, indifference, and the like.

The opinion of present-day officials is more intelligent, more socialized. A former superintendent of the Boston Parental School, for example, says, "Home environment will account for ninety-five per cent. of all cases of truants. Truants from good homes are generally abnormal." Truant and probation officers and school visitors now blame both the home and the street. Fifty years ago, the child shouldered most of the blame. Today the truant, like the juvenile offender, is no longer considered a criminal. The phrase "juvenile depravity" has entirely dropped out of our official vernacular. This is in accord with the new view that the child needs protection rather than punishment.

The emphasis on the influence of home and street is significant. But many other influences affect the problem. The methods of



combating truancy are therefore far from simple. Here is the story of a school deserter in a nutshell. It discloses many home and street influences and certainly hints at more than one cause, the search for which characterized all early investigations.

F. W. had been previously arrested for larceny and fined five dollars. He was the oldest in the family and had a brother eight years old and a sister ten. They lived in a tenement of four rooms for which they paid eight dollars a month. The building was in bad condition and the rooms unclean and poorly furnished. In the same tenement lived a boy who had formerly been committed for truancy. The father was a longshoreman, irregularly employed. He had been on the "Island" twice for drunkenness. The mother worked out two days a week, earning three dollars and a half. She was untidy and lacked energy, although she was considered respectable. The neighborhood was poor; the street, dirty and narrow. The leaders of some of the gangs which ruled

the district were "proud of their bad records."

Heretofore little effort has been made to get at the causes of truancy from the standpoint of the truants themselves. Here are their views expressed in compositions written in a truant school:

"I wanted to stay out of school because every time my work was wrong, the teacher hit me."

FELIX B. (French), age 8 years.

"I played truant because I could not do the work required of me. Another reason was that I did not have the clothes. Another was that the boys all hit me because I did not have good clothes. Sometimes my mother had to go with me because the boys hit me."

EDWARD R. (English), age 15 years.

"I played truant because I was to get a beating at school. I wanted to help my father. I went to my brother's farm not to go to school. I stayed there a year and a half. When I came back I did not go to school because I was ashamed I was so big."

ABRAHAM K. (Jewish), age 15 years.

"I played truant because I did not like to go to school when I was a small boy. And I played truant because I had to mind my father's shoe shine shop."

ANGELO P. (Italian), age 15 years.

"I played truant because I did not like the teacher. My mother would hit me when I came home. Sometimes I was beaten and would not go in all night. I stayed on the roof all night."

ABRAHAM A. (Jewish), age 9 years.

Two hundred and eighty-two boys wrote similar compositions. The classified results are as follows:

Disliked study, lessons too hard, thirty-six;  
Teacher cross, twenty-seven;  
Fear of punishment at school, twenty-three;  
To attend theater and ball games, eighty-two;

To hang around wharves, three;  
Influenced by older boys, seventy;  
To work, fourteen;  
To play, fourteen;  
To attend fair, five;  
To steal, two;  
To help mother, fourteen;

To help take care of sister, and  
For miscellaneous reasons, six.

It is significant that eighty-six truants, or about thirty per cent., "played hookey" on account of school conditions.

The letters also showed that twenty-eight, or ten per cent., were wholly or partly incapacitated for school work by defective hearing or sight; that 243 smoked (149 habitually); 90 attended Sunday school; 131 had attended kindergarten; 141 were club members; 143 had been visited at their homes by teachers; 209 were members of gangs; 183 bunked out more or less; 126 stole money; 103 earned money; and 73 had older brothers who had never played truant.

The ages of these boys varied from seven to fifteen years, boys thirteen years old constituting the largest group. The principal races represented were Irish, Italian and Jewish (in the order of their numerical importance). It is a noteworthy fact that it is not the immigrant

child, but the native-born child of immigrant parents who usually plays truant.

The mixture of good and bad in the school deserter is only human. There are noted school experts who would have us believe that truants are, as a class, physically, mentally and morally inferior to non-truants. Perhaps this is true of a small per cent. It is by no means true of the whole class. This "abnormal" theory smacks too much of the nineteenth-century "depravity" doctrine.

Some truants are quite normal and so responsive to new influences that they actually break down because they try too hard. Their sincere desire to do well, especially under changed circumstances, is pathetically revealed in the following letter from a truant in the making:

*"Dear Sir:*

"I think I have tried to do my best since you put me in the special grade. I no more than I use to no and I think it is a very nice grade. But I forget myself sometimes and I do the

same as the other children do and of course I get in trouble the same as the other children. Mr. — is nice but sometimes he gets cross with us but he can't help it because we make him do it. Course we must try to be helpful and good and we will get along a little better. The more you try the better you get along in your lessons. I have been good so far but a few times and then I was bad and got into trouble by not paying attention to what the teacher would say to me. Then of course I couldn't but get spoken to. I wrote this letter thinking it would be worth telling you about."

E. K.

The truant boy is steadily gaining in reputation. The conviction is growing that he is just a healthy animal refusing to be broken into a workhorse, unwilling to stay harnessed and be driven along the beaten path which leads to a diploma. He will not exchange the joy of living, carefree and independent, for the tasks of school imposed upon him by law and custom. He resents the readymade curriculum and routine which grown-ups have devised to crowd and ensnare childhood.

The truant is the typical play-boy of Street-Land. Oftentimes he is simply trying to make up for lost time. Jewish school boys, for example, who are also forced to go to Hebrew school every afternoon from four to seven, may desert school and home alike. Italian boys often do the same after long confinement at home work. Truancy, in this sense, is but an unofficial vacation and would seem as justifiable as the vacations of grown-ups.

School desertion then, writ large, is a healthy revolt on the part of active boys against inactive school life. "Our present school methods and, to a large extent, our school curriculum," Professor Dewey reminds us, "are inherited from the period when learning and the command of certain symbols, affording, as they did, the only access to learning, were all-important. Our education is still dominated by this mediæval conception of learning. It is something which appeals for the most part simply to the intellectual aspect of our natures, our desire to learn, to accumulate information

and to get control of the symbols of learning; not to our impulses to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or of art."

Can we expect every boy to like this sort of education well enough to endure it for eight or nine years without a break? Yet unwillingness to do so was once considered criminal and was criminally punished. We now insist on reforming the rebellious boy, still half-believing that there is something morally wrong with him.

At an important conference held in Chicago, a fresh attempt was made to get at the causes and remedies of truancy. Various research committees had been investigating special phases of the problem for the benefit of the conference. Tom Truant had been studied from cradle to adolescence. Some examined the workings of his mind. Others sounded the secrets of his heart. Still others studied his curve of fatigue. At the same time, a committee of mothers investigated his environment—his home, his school and his street,



The conference which was to pass on the findings of the committees was attended by judges, probation officers, truant officers, social workers, medical examiners, teachers and college presidents as well as by plain fathers and mothers. Meetings were held three times daily for three days in succession. Having listened to the reports and carefully deliberated upon them, this distinguished gathering of sober people came to the conclusion that the mothers' report came nearer the truth than any of the others.

This committee reported that, according to their findings, Tom Truant was neither abnormal nor bad but, on the contrary, rather better than his environment. They found that Tom first absented himself from school because he had no shoes or nothing to eat, or because there was sickness in the family, or because he had to take care of the baby or run errands. Having taken this first step toward truancy, Tom was apt to go from bad to worse until he came to prefer loafing to schooling and

sooner or later hardened into an incorrigible offender. These mothers frankly blamed the city more than Tom—its homes, its schools, its streets. The conference agreed with them and resolved to do its best not merely to reform Tom, but to improve his environment and increase his chances for being good.

The newly-awakened social conscience toward the truant is best exemplified in advance legislation. The 1913 truancy law of Massachusetts absolutely forbids the establishment of a truant school at, or even near, a penal institution. Yet fifty years ago, the truant school was virtually the juvenile department of a prison. Moreover, the very names "truant officer" and "truant school" are now abolished and the words "attendance officer" and "training school" used instead. One sees in these compulsory education laws not merely a change of name but also of heart and purpose.

Their spirit is akin to that of the recent delinquency laws of the more enlightened States of the Union. Former juvenile codes have

been purged of the criminal taint by carefully defining and reinterpreting delinquent acts. Children committing criminal offenses are no longer deemed criminal but rather in need of aid, encouragement and guidance. The abolition of the Boston truant school, organized about twenty years ago, marks the end of the idea of punishment in dealing with truants.

Our newest truant schools are training schools, and so suggest that the wrong has been, not in the boys, but in the school system. Why do the ideal truant schools interest boys while our common schools apparently fail to do so? Primarily because they pay closer attention to the interests and activities of the child who is "different"; because they supply an environment which is wholesome and a curriculum which is dynamic; because, in short, they have organized a school life the keynote of which is *doing* rather than listening.

It seems a pity and a perversion of the spirit of reform that a boy must be committed for truancy before he can enjoy such privileges as

outdoor and machine-shop work. These forms of learning by doing are efficacious antidotes to the wanderlust. If the new truant schools do no more than demonstrate what our public schools should be in order to hold the deserter, they will have served their purpose.

The street, also, is teaching us how to deal with school-runaways. If the call of the street is so irresistible during the spring months when truancy is at its height, why not answer the call and make the most of the opportunity? Is it not still an open question whether you can learn more during the precious spring months indoors than you can out-of-doors? Are we not committing our school life to the folly of our workaday life, spending it as we do within four walls designed to meet the greatest rigors of winter weather? Is the broad spring to enter our hearts and the hearts of our little ones only through windows?

The Greeks, free from doctrines of sin and most alive to the joys of living, avoided hot-

house education by carrying on their teaching in grove and market-place.

When President Eliot of Harvard University suggested the environs of Franklin Park in Boston as a desirable location for school-houses, the transportation economists laughed it out of court on the ground of expense. Only lack of imagination really stands in the way of carrying out this idea which is both the oldest and the newest in education.

New York City, which has a way of executing an advanced idea while it is being indefinitely debated in Boston, has just established an outdoor school in a small park called Manhattan Square, where the American Museum of Natural History is located. Riverside and Central Parks are also used. The opening of this school-in-park marks a new era in kindergarten teaching. This new school shows that there is nothing quixotic about open-air teaching. No attempt is made to have the children go out on rainy days. When the weather

is bad, they remain in the school building. Attendance is said to be much more regular than at exclusively indoor schools.

Another merit of the outdoor school is that the children acquire a decidedly free swing in their work. When they draw in chalk on the sidewalk, they naturally make everything large and not small and cramped as they necessarily do on the blackboard of the classroom.

Incidentally, the teacher in charge of this outdoor school is also demonstrating an important principle which is especially applicable to supervision of street life,—that all children who now play promiscuously in streets and parks should be grouped according to age or size.

It is quite probable that our fundamental lack of vision will for a long time stand in the way of reorganizing our educational practice to meet the demands of changing seasons. It is therefore comforting to note that educational betterment is at least beginning to catch up with other forms of social betterment.

Those who work for the general improvement of social conditions are certainly doing their share in the fight against school desertion. In fact, district nurses, medical inspectors, juvenile street-work supervisors and other child-saving agents are really doing more to overcome school indifference than most truant officers. The latter are after truant children rather than the truant problem. They are so busy with the effects of truancy that they have no time to deal with the causes. The new type of attendance officer coöperates with the social worker in trying to abolish truants, truant officers and truant schools alike.

The many causes of school desertion call for as many remedies—certainly many more than early authorities looked for or ever dreamed of employing. These remedies are the result of a clearer understanding of the many types of children classed together as truants. We have fortunately outlived the notion that there are just two classes of children, the good and bad; and that truants are necessarily bad. We

have finally discerned the truth that all children are different—some of them especially bright and others dull and backward; some mentally defective, others defective in hearing, sight, or breathing; some strong, others anæmic or tubercular; some precocious, others subnormal; some veritable bookworms, others with no taste for book knowledge but with a passion for using their sense gifts.

A finer classification of children in the elementary schools is now being tried out everywhere. Each group necessarily calls for different treatment. Special classes are being organized to meet the needs of individual children. There are in many schools small classes for abnormal and defective children. Troublemakers are put into classes of about fifteen. The size of regular classes has been reduced from sixty to forty. All these movements are steps in the right direction and should be encouraged everywhere.

Much and varied handwork is being introduced into some schools for those who can best



profit by such activities. Home and school visitors are of great value in interpreting and reconstructing the work of truant officers. The licensing and supervision of children trading in city streets has proven effective against a commercial stimulus to school desertion. Medical inspection for all children, provision for exceptionally weak children through fresh-air rooms and camps, departments of hygiene and playgrounds, parents' and teachers' associations,—all these are powerful weapons against truancy, waywardness and delinquency. These social agencies in a large variety of forms and under different names are springing up in nearly every American city.

Most cities, however, are still woefully in need of a constructive program for improving school attendance, which is generally only eighty per cent. of the enrollment. First of all, our compulsory education laws, which, in some States, have remained untouched for decades, should be revised in the spirit of the Massachusetts model truancy law. Further-

more, compulsory education may well be re-interpreted in view of the results accomplished in Gary, Indiana, where the school children are so interested in their work that they must be "compelled" to go home.

Every city should take a school census annually. It should also have a follow-up system for newly-arrived immigrant children. Moreover, every truant force should be organized into a department of compulsory education. Each attendance officer should be made responsible for the school attendance of all children in a given district, whether they attend public, parochial or private schools. All courts should be enlisted in the uniform enforcement of improved compulsory education laws. Every superintendent of schools should have authority to transfer truants without court proceedings. In this way, many boys would be saved the usual disgrace of a court record.

Some States have already successfully tried out the experiment of fining parents found re-

sponsible for truancy. Such parents are made to contribute to the care of truants. This system has just been adopted in Massachusetts. It should be the rule in all States.

All training or truant schools should be incorporated into the public school system. The boys should be trained during the term of commitment in such a way that they may be able to earn a livelihood upon their discharge. The schools should also aid them, as some now do, to find the kind of work for which they were trained. A person often needs a job more than anything else in the world. The politician fully appreciates this general need. Why should not the educator? The school which is successful in aiding its graduates to find employment will be longer remembered by them for this simple act than for its entire curriculum.

## CHAPTER V.

### VACATION TIME

*Vacation ideals of city and country boys—Length of school vacations—The vacation call—Summer adventure—Girls' vacation activities—Immigrant children in Street-Land—Summer hardships—Increase in juvenile crime—Present-day solutions of the summer problem: Church picnics—Vacation Bible Schools—Country outings—Caddying—Farming—The Boy Scout Movement and city boys—The Camp Fire Girls and the girls of Street-Land—Vacation schools—City gardening.*

A CITY boy who was visiting his cousin in a country school was asked to write a letter telling how he spent the day before in the city. He wrote as follows:

"Yesterday was April fool day and we played jokes. I took a can and string and tied it on a man's back and had some fun. We played puss in the corner and the shot games

and all other games, and we played marbles around the streets."

His country cousin wrote in quite a different vein:

"Yesterday I watched summer time coming. A robin sat on my window and sang a song to me. Jack Frost is gone. From his hiding place a trout peeped out. And the willow catkins were hanging on the trees. All of the children were very happy walking into the Meadow and through the beautiful tall grass and picking the lovely daisies and pretty little violets, the buds on the trees also. The flowers bust open and all the pretty birds sang their song of May. We went out into the garden to water the beautiful flowers. When darkness fell into the room we prayed so soft and sweet."

The contrast between these two letters is quite obvious. No city boy could very well have written the second letter. Yet one feels instinctively that its suggestions are safer and saner for a holiday program than those of the city boy. The city boy's plans for mischief are a mild suggestion of the "rowdyism, dissi-

pation and forced fun" which city children resort to in vacation time.

One must realize how long the summer vacation is and how many are the shorter vacations in order to appreciate properly the street boys' opportunities for mischief and, worse still, for laziness. In many States, the long vacation lasts four or five months. In the more educationally advanced States, it lasts three months. Short vacations are numerous and range from one day to a month. The average annual term of school is but one hundred and fifty-seven days out of three hundred and sixty-five, or, in terms of actual hours spent in the classroom, one-tenth of the entire year. In several States, it is little more than one hundred days out of the year.

Yet the little folk of Street-Land eagerly look forward to vacations. On rainy mornings they gather early at the fire stations awaiting the sign in the window—"No School Today." At its welcome appearance, all burst into loud hurrahs as if they had been suddenly

released from prison. As for the regular vacations, they never come too frequently. This restlessness on the part of city children is due largely to school inaction, which gets on their nerves.

While adults seek vacation as a respite from work, children await the school recesses, anxious to do things. To most adults, vacation stands for a rest; to children, it means recreation, action.

City children always anticipate the summer vacation. Spring fever comes with the first whiff of spring and keeps the truant officers busy. As the days get warmer, mere study in stuffy classrooms becomes impossible. Boys especially, stirred by the call of spring, yield to the wanderlust. Those who resist the impulse are a greater problem to the teachers than the others are to the truant officers.

I recall an ungraded class which I often had occasion to visit. The boys were restless and habitually cross. The teacher complained that they had the "blues" from Monday to Friday.

They would not pay attention or do as they were told. Instead, they ingeniously devised ways of doing the things which they yearned to do in the open. They played spitball in place of baseball; they twirled pencils instead of tops. Naturally the teacher was glad to release them at the close of the term for better or for worse.

Street-Land with all its drawbacks is more interesting than school, especially in summer. The street does not drive the child: it leads him on—to discovery, conquest, amusement, self-expression. These are indeed some of the fruits which street children gather in vacation time. Summer adventure offers boundless opportunities,—from tumbling into the Frog Pond to actually getting arrested. The summer vacation is the period for surveying neighborhoods; for fathoming the Great Beyond lying outside the gates of the city. For children, too, enjoy planning and executing “surveys.”

Italian and Portuguese boys like to go off on summer-long fishing trips. They drop out



of school early and suddenly. By the middle of May they have turned their backs on the city and virtually live on the water. Sometimes they depart for the Grand Banks,—quite beyond the reach of the truant officer and envied by the children on shore.

Children love to wander off and lose themselves in the street jungle. They are led from point to point by curiosity or by the call of distant playmates. Here and there they halt to have a game, to inspect a gun in a window, to snatch a peanut from a stand, to view a fight or to give royal battle when the opportunity presents itself. A torn-up street will tempt a boy of five to move farther and farther on until the very last red lantern is investigated. By this time he is a mile from home and completely lost in the city wilderness.

Lost children are very commonly reported at police stations on pleasant summer evenings. It was my privilege every now and then to bring a wandering child home at midnight and receive the thanks of a grateful mother. On

the other hand, it was very pathetic to find immigrant mothers late at night visiting the haunts of street boys in search of Angelo or "Davidel *mein kind*."

Girls spend their vacations nearer home than boys. They are more useful in the house and coöperate better with their mothers. The boys are therefore literally turned out of the homes into the streets to play; and the girls are kept busy inside with dish-washing, sweeping, dusting and cleaning windows. During meal times, the latter frequently run errands for mother. At the same time, their brothers may be running errands for neighbors at the price of a ticket to the movies. Many girls spend the greater part of the summer on the sidewalk "minding" the baby. Very often a girl is obliged to do all the washing and cleaning—even the preparing of the meals—when her mother is away doing housework for other people.

One girl describes her day's program as follows:

"In the morning, I help my mother to clean the house. In the afternoon I take my sister's baby out till five o'clock. Then I do my errands for supper. After supper I go to choir rehearsal."

Another girl says:

"Every Saturday I go up town to do my shopping. When I get home I dress my baby and go for a walk with him until six o'clock. Then I go with my mother up the avenue to buy everything for Sunday what she needs."

Street-Land in summer time is full of immigrant children who have just arrived in large numbers. They are keener to know their environment than are the grown-ups. They plan trips of exploration to the parks, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Public Library, and execute them in the spirit of true pioneers. The American show-windows lure them from all directions. The five-and-ten-cent stores are their mecca. Consequently, before summer is over, they know more about America than their parents will know in ten years.

These possibilities for actual contact with the larger city life about them, if organized, would go further than the school curriculum toward Americanizing immigrant children. Sightseeing trips, for example, ought to be made a part of a general scheme of summer recreation under supervision. Every city should have a recreation director who should begin by charting all summer possibilities and then proceed to organize the children into groups best calculated to take advantage of them. Otherwise, immigrant children are apt sooner or later to lose their desire to know their city and retrograde into aimless street wanderers without any vacation plan or purpose.

One of the boys in an ungraded class, in response to an inquiry as to how he proposed to spend his summer, handed in the following letter:

*"My dear Fremd*

*"You ask me how I am going to spend my vacation. I am going to play boul in the park and then I am going to the country to pick flow-*

ers. I cant tell you what I am going to do till the day comes. Then I will do what I think is right.

“Hoping that this little will rest you all right.

“I am yours troule,

“BORIS B.”

In spite of the tempting opportunities, a summer in Street-Land is full of hardship. By the middle of June, record temperatures are common. Sunstrokes occur daily. Older people are most affected, but children also suffer. Little folks become enervated. Brick tenements and stone pavements accentuate the heat; they bottle it up, so to speak. The home is no more comfortable than the street. The kitchen stove is generally going. Children do not care to stay inside nor are they allowed to tarry much in the house. Hauling coal and wood, the most common city chore, is temporarily suspended; and running errands for mother is not very popular. Summer in Street-Land is often nerve-racking. Many children “go to pieces.” According to the testimony of phy-

sicians, their general health suffers. Life is irregular and disorganized. Meals are no longer regulated by the school bell. There is nothing to do but play and no place for play but the street.

The most serious phase of summer life is the increase in juvenile crime. There are juvenile crimes in season as there are fruits in season. Stealing fruit from pushcarts is one of them and is both old and common. Stealing ice, on the other hand, is new and uncommon.

Freight-car refrigerators offer the best opportunity for free ice. Here is a line of cars stretching the length of the avenue. Some of them are full of ice, always at a premium in summer. How is this ice to reach the tenement home? The credit of solving this problem belongs to street boys. This is their scheme. A signal boy stands at each end of the train on the lookout for officers and brakemen. Two other boys with rope and tackle scale the car. One goes down into the tank and ties the rope around a piece of ice. The

other hoists it up and then lowers it into a cart. As soon as the cart is full the boy who mans it disappears in an alley. Presently another cart appears. Thus the work goes on until the brakeman is spied coming from Jerry's Bar. In an instant the ice business comes to a standstill and the boys vanish.

Bunking out is another favorite pastime during the summer. The weather greatly encourages such an adventure. The stuffy tenements drive boys to sleep out. This habit begins simply enough, but leads to serious juvenile crimes.

Many people realize the dangers of vacation time in Street-Land. Every summer, therefore, witnesses some new child-saving experiments. Tim Sullivan's outing for New York children is a classic of one type of endeavor. It is the politician's solution of the summer problem.

Church picnics for children of the congested districts are very common and reach many thousands every summer. Most of these pic-

nics are exceedingly helpful. Churches which raise money for summer outings under the supervision of children's societies accomplish the greater good which is made possible by the experience, organization and supervision of expert agencies.

The Daily Vacation Bible School is an experiment which the churches in many large cities have been trying out with some success. It stands for the extended use of the church plants so often closed in summer. It invites the services of students otherwise disengaged during the vacation. Though the emphasis is mainly on the Bible, the children also get valuable training in singing, games, little pageants and handicraft.

Philanthropic agencies are even more active. Generous sums of money are spent every summer to bring the starved souls of street folk in contact with nature. In nearly every city, opportunity is given to thousands of children for day excursions, week-end trips and vacations, varying in length from one day to fourteen.



Camps, beaches and play spaces are maintained at great cost in order to provide recreation.

All this is helpful but totally inadequate. The public is apt to misconceive the situation in believing that the summer work attempted here and there benefits all the children in need of such help. Like open-air classes for anæmic children, or school lunches for under-nourished children, summer work at best hardly reaches five per cent. of those in need. Summer work is handicapped further by its temporary nature. Moreover, it often fails to help those for whom it is especially intended.

For example, Scouting is a luxury to the schoolboy who must earn a livelihood during the summer. To meet the requirements of this class of boys, one of the pioneer social settlements, the South End House of Boston, has instituted a system of caddying which meets most demands of an ideal summer vacation and offers, besides, a chance to earn and save a substantial sum. Caddying on the golf links in New Hampshire is therefore very popular

now among Boston boys. This opportunity is the rich reward of the boy in the settlement who has proven most faithful, and otherwise deserving, in the season's work.

A similar experiment, first tried on a large scale by Bert Hall of Milwaukee, is finding city children light summer work on farms. Every boy is expected to earn his board. A children's society pays the fare. Many farmers have expressed a willingness to aid in furthering this movement.

Farming out has its serious drawbacks. It is too closely akin to child labor. Without a great deal of supervision, this placing-out system is subject to abuse. The ideal plan is for a whole family to go to the country for the summer. This plan, unfortunately, is still the rare privilege of the few whose children, if they have any, are least in need of such a vacation.

Scouting, so vigorously introduced into boy life all over the country, is of especial value to schoolboys during the vacation period. There are three hundred thousand Scouts in this

country, organized into patrols under Scout Masters.

Scouting is distinctively educational because it draws out the dormant instincts in the city boy, which have become abortive for want of opportunity to exercise them. Building fires, climbing trees, chopping wood, tying knots, following the trail, truly educate. They educated the race, and should be part of every city boy's life. It is unfortunate that the required uniforms and outfits tend to bar out poor boys. Furthermore, many possibilities in the Scout Movement for typical street boys are still awaiting development. But suggestive examples are numerous.

In the village of Merrimac, Massachusetts, which maintains no street department, the Scouts pick up the paper and other litter from the main streets. Each street has its committee and reports are called for at every meeting.

During a fire in a suburb of Troy, New York, the first to reach the scene were the Boy Scouts.

"They formed a bucket brigade and kept the fire under control until the firemen arrived. The firemen said that if it had not been for the Souts the damage would have been far greater, and they might not have been able to save the buildings."

Some cities, like New York, recognizing the possibilities for disinterested service from street boys under organization and control, are offering municipal lectures for Scouts describing the workings of the street, fire, police and health departments.

The boys of Troop Forty in Brooklyn, New York, who had no opportunity to get out into the country during the summer, established a camp on a vacant lot. "Many Scouts, by sleeping there fifty nights, fulfilled one of the requirements for the Camping-Merit badge."

Monster pow-wows are held on vacant lots everywhere during the summer season. Singing, telling stories and performing stunts are but a part of the rich entertainment programs for summer evenings.

These instances, taken freely from Boys' Life, the Boy Scouts' magazine, show many opportunities for making dreary street life interesting, vital, even fascinating, to the poorest city boys. Its special value to street boys during those days when time just drags and moral life ebbs may be illustrated by Sammy's predicament.

For years, Sammy sold papers on his own corner in front of a saloon. His father, having acquired property, told him that it was not "nice" for the son of a "real-estatenick" to sell papers. Accordingly, Sammy walked proudly into the office of the School Committee and turned in his badge. But the corner habit was so firmly implanted that he could not resist it.

One day, I found him begging, apparently for lack of something else to do. When the matter was presented to him in conference at the office, in the presence of his parents and teacher, Sammy, whose record of attendance, scholarship and conduct was always up to the

standard, at last realized what the corner habit might lead to.

"What can I do to redeem myself?" he asked.

At the suggestion that he join the Boy Scouts, since he could well afford a uniform, Sammy caught the vision of a new world. Scouting saved him.

The Camp Fire Girls are a sister institution to the Boy Scouts, but on a smaller scale. They have not yet reached the typical street girls. Yet the possibilities of this movement are as great as those of the Boy Scouts.

Girls' interests center round miniature homes, doll families and little gardens,—the abiding interests of childhood which need especially to be kept alive in city girls. Camp Fire Girls could encourage the favorite games of old, such as London Bridge and Going to Jerusalem. They could also encourage folk dancing where the environment is favorable. The Virginia Reel and "Pop Goes the Weasel" would do more to bring together the little

Polish, Italian and Jewish girls of the blind alleys than the patriotic speeches of the school-room.

Who else shall teach these little girls how to sing and dance together in Street-Land? How is the fair-haired Annushka, but yesterday from Poland, ever to learn all about "Mary had a Little Lamb"? If the Camp Fire Girls mixed freely with the little girls of Street-Land, the product would certainly be a finer type of American womanhood.

So much for private efforts to cope with the summer problem.

So far as municipal enterprise is concerned, the vacation schools, next to the playgrounds, are most important and promising. Like playgrounds, vacation schools were originally planned primarily to keep children off the streets during the trying summer months. The first vacation schools were the result of private initiative, but they were fast taken over by municipalities and incorporated into the school systems.

The earliest school on record was started in 1866 in the old First Church of Boston. In 1894, the New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor opened its first vacation schools. After four years of demonstration, the city undertook the control and management of the ten schools then under the care of the Society. The first private vacation school of Chicago was organized in 1896. The schools of Philadelphia and Indianapolis opened their doors in 1898. From that time on, summer vacation schools spread rapidly. In 1903, nearly every city in the United States of one hundred thousand inhabitants or more maintained vacation schools. Today most of the schools are conducted by the cities themselves.

There are two types of vacation school, the original indoor-and-outdoor playground type and the academic type. Both meet genuine city needs. The latter is very recent but is developing fast. It is intended for retarded or backward pupils who desire to make up their deficiencies, as well as for strong and ambitious



pupils anxious to gain advanced standing. Thousands of children, not promoted, attend these continuation classes and thereby succeed in entering their respective grades in the fall. This saves them a year. Many children are promoted in June on condition that they attend a vacation school and cover "skipped" work. This sort of schooling is a splendid substitute for summer loafing.

The out-and-out playground type is very popular because its organized activities are those city children crave all through the long school year. That the academic type also appeals to certain classes of city children may be judged from the following letter:

*"Dear Mr. Teacher:*

"I go to write you a letter what I am going to do necst week wen my teacher give us vacation. The first day Monday I have to liarn all my lessons from school. Tuesday morning I sell papers. Wen I cam from my papers I have to write a story from my book, the name of the story is Hiawatha's sailing, and in the night I have to go in Sivek's (Civic Service) House,

because I go in Sivek's House evrey night and I riad books. And Wednesday and Tursday and Friday this same with all days to write and riad and to work. I hope I well have a goot time, for all. And I hope you shell have a good time too.

"I findesh my letter.

"from your people,

"SAMUEL D."

An interesting result of the summer vacation school is the all-year school of Newark, New Jersey, similar to the all-year University of Chicago. The all-year school, provided its curriculum is sane and its outdoor and indoor activities meet the demands of true organic education, is, after all, the best solution of the summer problem. It meets the common objection of parents and educators that the school term is much too short and the school holidays too numerous.

The vacation school, though popular with certain types of children, by no means reaches all children let loose on the streets in summer. Only yesterday, even school yards and play-

grounds were closed during the warm months. Nowhere has the attempt been made to utilize in comprehensive fashion the vast public reservations of which many municipalities and commonwealths are justly proud. Public playgrounds are multiplying rapidly and are especially active during the summer time. But municipal outings to the woods and water excursions, even where such opportunities are numerous, are rare. Summer recreation for city children is still less favored than summer education.

In Boston, the cultivation of vacant lots is carried on under the auspices of the Boston Social Union, a federation of twenty-two settlements and other neighborhood centers. Instructors are maintained to teach the little gardeners who pay for their own seeds and rent the land and tools for twenty-five cents a season. When registering, children agree to stand by certain necessary rules with respect to the neglect of plots, the care of tools, the gathering of crops, disobedience and stealing.

This work is directly related to the schools of the vicinity. The children learn the connection between gardening and Nature Study as well as home plant-growing. The Superintendent of Schools, appreciating their educational value, recommended that these gardens be made an integral part of the school system. This many-sided experiment in city life should be tried in every city which is shamed by its dumps and troubled by its street problem.

Many suggestions made elsewhere acquire special value and urgency from the standpoint of the summer vacation. The increased hazard of street life during the long summer vacation makes all the more urgent the curfew, street supervision and the more basic reforms suggested in the last chapter of this book.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHILD WORKERS IN THE STREETS

*Standards of street work abroad — Latest U. S. Census returns — Street-working children vs. factory children: Age and time limits — Earnings and environments compared — Exploitation of newsboys — Does newspaper selling pay? — Types of juvenile peddlers — Gutter bootblacks — Night messenger boys — The messenger boy and the bicycle — Subtler phases of child labor — Dangers of the street as a workshop: physical, moral, educational — The road to vagrancy.*

THE street is, to a large extent, not only both home and school for city children, but it is also their workshop. There are numerous kinds of work which children do in city streets.

In America such occupations have never received the attention they have had in Great Britain, Germany, Austria and France during the past two decades. These countries first instituted nation-wide inquiries which sug-

gested national laws. The enactment of these laws in large measure did away with the more flagrant evils connected with juvenile street work. The industrial code of Germany shows the greatest advance. It forbids children under fourteen to offer goods for sale on public roads, streets or places, or to peddle them from house to house. It also forbids children under twelve to deliver goods or perform other errands except for their parents.

While these European countries were working out national standards of both factory and street work, our federal government made some half-hearted attempts, through the Census, to ascertain the number of children employed directly or indirectly in factories, mines and streets. The Census of 1900, under such remote and vague headings as "other persons in trade and transportation" and "other domestic and personal service," feebly suggested that there might be several thousand newsboys and bootblacks in the country. Any newsboy could have told the enumerators that there were prob-

ably as many as that in New York City alone.

A more sincere effort was made by the Census of 1910. The enumerators were told to report all children working for money or other gain. For the first time in the history of census-taking, canvassers were instructed to specify not only the kind of work done, but also the industry and place (whether factory, farm, mine or street).

The Census reveals the fact that in April, 1910, there were nearly two million children of from ten to sixteen years of age at work. There were sixty-seven thousand newsboys, bootblacks, peddlers and messengers (including office and bundle boys) of this age, and almost fifty-three thousand more from sixteen to twenty. There were in all then about one hundred and twenty thousand boys and girls working in city streets.

There are obvious reasons why these figures, in spite of the instructions to the enumerators, are far below the true numbers. In the first place, no account is given of children doing

chores for their parents and others without compensation. All children from five to ten who not only commonly help their brothers, but are themselves regularly engaged in "gainful occupations," are as yet unaccounted for, although the Census has no other value except as a statement of conditions existing at the time it was taken; namely, April, 1910.

The last, and most important, source of error lies in the fact that the enumerators got their information as to the occupations of children from the parents at home. Street workers themselves are too much on the run to be caught in any enumeration. As everyone knows, parents, fearing trouble, are only too prone to deny that their children are working.

The inadequacy of these Census returns may further be shown by an examination of the records of any city which licenses street workers. In Boston, for example, there were, by actual count, twenty-two hundred newsboys at the very time when the Census enumerators discovered but four hundred and twenty-seven.



Chicago, with a population three times as great as Boston, is credited by the Census with three hundred newsboys under sixteen. It is therefore conceivable that a more honest count of street workers all over the country would disclose three hundred thousand rather than one hundred and twenty thousand.

No one has yet adequately explained why this vast army of juvenile street workers has received so little attention as compared with child laborers in factories. An analysis of the two types of child labor will show that street-working children are in many respects worse off than factory children.

In most States, the age limit for factory work is fourteen years. In only seventeen States is any attempt made by legislation to recognize the existence of street traders. In these States, the age limit is generally ten years. Missouri forbids a boy under fourteen to work in a factory, but allows a youngster of ten to sell papers and other wares on the streets. Even the State of Colorado, which has done so much

for juvenile delinquents, allows a girl of ten to engage in street trade but forbids her thirteen-year-old sister to work in a shop.

In most of the States which regulate street trades, the age limit is somewhat higher for girls than for boys. Is this difference due to a recognition of the moral dangers of the street? If so, have we really made up our minds that we can afford to expose boys to greater moral strain? In the most advanced States, the age limit for boy street workers is usually twelve years, while for girls it is eighteen. The Commission on Uniform Child Labor Law advocates twenty-one years as the age limit for girls who are obliged to stand constantly at their work. A similar body recommended the same age limit in Great Britain.

Practically half the States prohibit children from working more than eight hours a day in factories. In street work, the laws designate no minimum daily hours of labor. Frequently, however, they do establish morning and evening time limits, usually six A. M. and ten P. M.

This means that street workers, even in the best-regulated States, may work from six in the morning till eight or ten at night, as the case may be, except during school hours. Obviously juvenile street workers are very far from an eight-hour day.

A comparison of the earnings of the two classes of working children shows that factory children are again better off in the long run. The congressional report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage-Earners in the United States shows that children in factories, ranging in age from ten to sixteen, earn approximately nine to ten cents an hour. The Parliamentary report on children trading in streets shows that the average earnings of the forty-five thousand street vendors investigated throughout England and Wales are a shilling a day.

No such reliable national investigation has ever been made in this country. But private investigations made in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Buffalo and

Detroit confirm the returns from England. Many boys earn less than twenty cents a day. A few make more than fifty cents. But most street workers earn but twenty-five cents a day. Assuming that five hours is a fair average length of a street-vendor's working day, he earns but five cents an hour.

Let us now consider the conditions under which children work. Here, too, the contrast between factory and street is marked. Owing to constant legal pressure, factory conditions are improving steadily every year. Social standards of sanitation and safety are gradually evolving out of the chaos of our present competitive system of industry. These standards are being embodied in our factory legislation as fast as they are developed.

No community, however, has as yet enacted into law social standards for street conditions. The socialization of the street, unlike the socialization of the factory, has hardly begun. Therefore our home, school and church stand-

ards of conduct are constantly threatened on the streets.

Street boys find business best in districts where saloons and pool rooms abound, where men drink and women earn and spend money fast. Here selling papers, blacking boots and peddling flowers go hand in hand with begging, smoking, gambling and picking pockets. Yet the community makes little effort to improve the conditions, although it does what it can to remove the boys,—a splendid illustration of the fable about fencing around the cliff above or keeping the ambulance busy below!

Conditions in some newspaper mailing rooms are far worse than those usually found in factories. Hundreds of boys are herded together in badly-ventilated rooms for hours at a time. The treatment of these boys during the time when the copies, hot from the press, are being distributed, needs to be humanized. The boys fight for copies as though it were a matter of life and death. I have seen them

climb over one another's backs in their efforts to get nearest the distributing counter, the boys underneath bearing the load rather than yielding place. The attendant in charge often uses a stick most freely. Such handling not merely toughens boys, as is commonly claimed, but is a form of brutality which may manifest itself in adult life in many ugly forms.

In contrast to factory workers, street vendors are exposed to all extremes of weather. Summer or winter, rain or snow, they are the inevitable victims of all changes. Too often, they are caught unprotected. But they always hold their ground in dogged defiance of the storm.

Juvenile street trades comprise the city chores which children daily perform for a living. These trades often merge into one another. Like the country boy who has to do all kinds of chores, a street worker frequently sells papers, blacks boots and runs errands on the same day.

Newsboys, the largest group of street work-

ers in every city, are generally divided into sellers and carriers. There are also the wholesalers and retailers. The wholesalers are, for the most part, older boys employed by the newspapers to sell and "boost" their respective papers. The wholesalers "own corners" and use groups of boys to sell for them on commission, generally one cent out of five. These, in turn, engage smaller boys known as "strikers" to assist them, giving them a commission out of their own, which often amounts to no more than ten cents for a whole day's work. In these and other ways, the real "newsies," the majority of whom are but little children, are exploited on every hand.

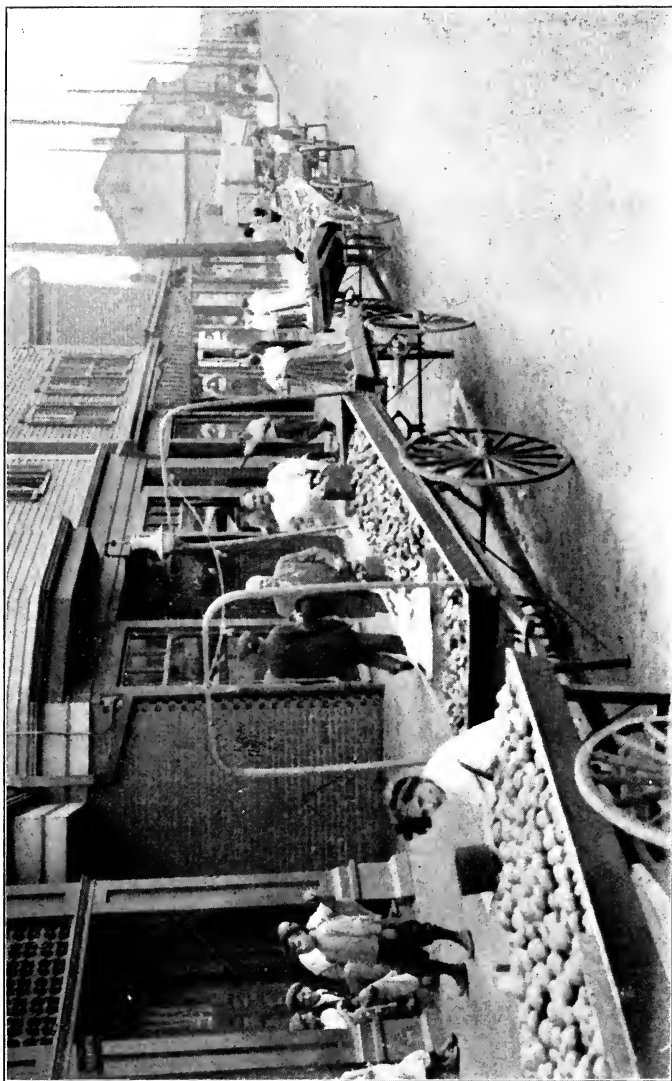
Another form of exploitation is the corner institution. A corner is any stand or foothold which a boy claims as his own by right of squatter sovereignty. Old and well-established corners are sold and leased at enormous rates. I drew contracts for some which sold at one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Others were leased for two dollars a week or for

sixty per cent. of the proceeds. The ownership of new corners is fought for on mixed issues of might and right. The first claimant is generally upheld not only by the unwritten law of newsboys, but even by the police officer on the beat.

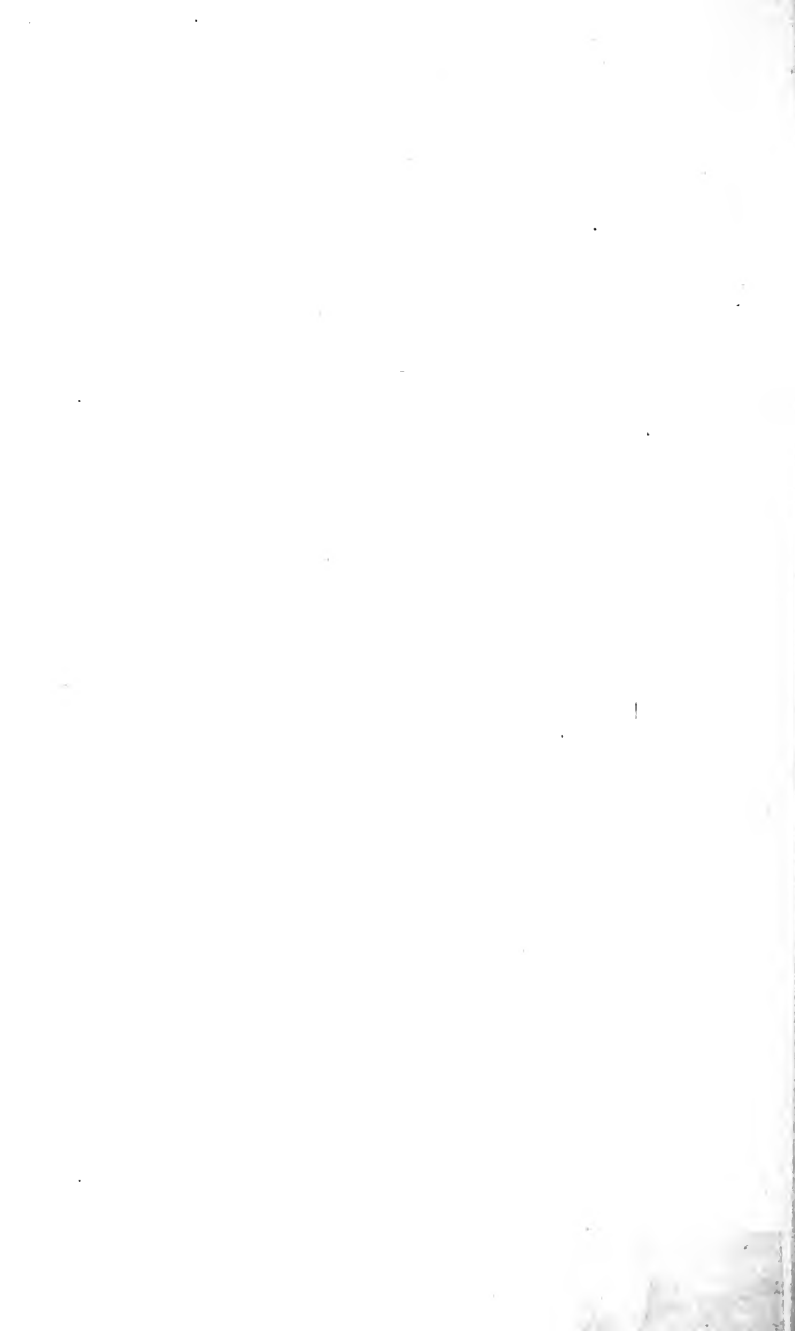
The newsboy who is determined to succeed will sell both morning and evening. When school is not in session, he will sell all day long, stopping only for short intervals while waiting for new editions. This interval may be an hour or fifteen minutes, but it rarely gives him a chance to have a meal at home.

Considering the environment, with all its dangers, it is obvious that newspaper selling has serious drawbacks too lightly dismissed by newspaper men who are fully alive to the general evils of child labor. Even the public, as yet somewhat unenlightened on the subject of street trades, justifies them on the ground that they are necessary evils. But if family necessity is relieved only to the extent of twenty-five cents a day, is such work worth while?





The Girl Behind the Pushcart



## CHILD WORKERS IN STREETS 155

Peddler boys sell fruit, vegetables, chewing gum, notions, shoe-strings, candy and novelties of all kinds. Little sisters often help them.

Fruit and vegetable peddlers are numerous everywhere, especially in the markets. On Saturday between three and eleven P. M., and on the eve of any important holiday, scores of boys help handle the market trade. They are mostly Italian and Greek boys, some of them only seven years of age. The remuneration for a whole day's work is frequently a bagful of specked fruit.

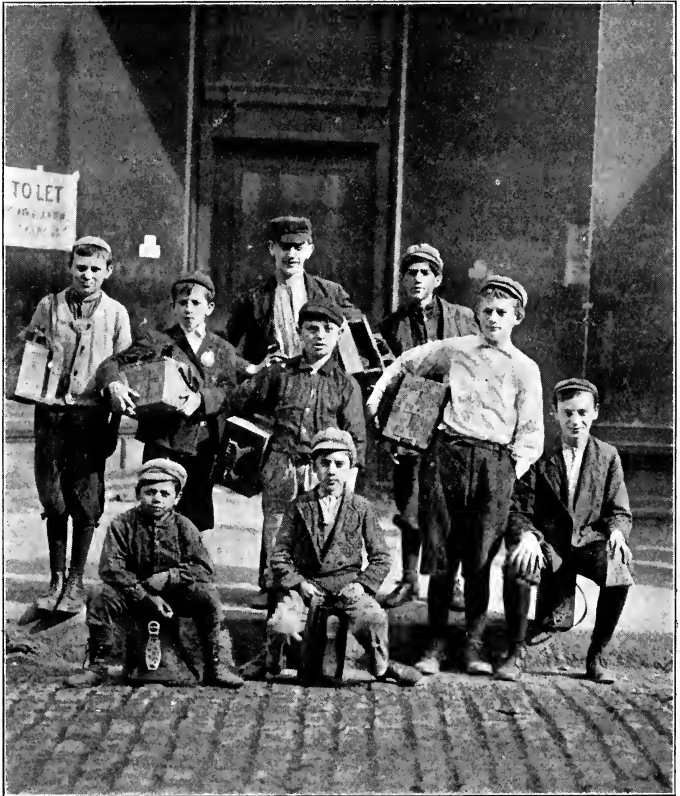
Novelty peddlers break loose occasionally, appearing at fairs, on circus and football days and, especially, during the toy season before Christmas. Their numbers swell the unmanageable army which fills Fakirs' Row in every city. They vanish as suddenly as they appear, following the crowd and playing hide-and-seek as successfully as if they were in the woods. Police officers consider it unwise to chase them, for on such occasions mob law reigns supreme,

and the mob is unfailingly on the side of the "kid."

The old-fashioned bootblack who knocks about the streets with his shine-box over his shoulder in quest of trade is gradually being eliminated. The new bootblack "parlors" are proving the theory of the survival of the fittest. Indeed a man can now enter a mirrored room, climb into a comfortable chair and, by dropping a nickel in the slot, get a perfect shine—by machinery.

In the larger cities, bootblacks make no attempt to do business during the week. But on Saturdays and Sundays and on the eve of holidays, they appear with their shine-boxes. Frequently they insist on shining shoes in spite of rain and mud. If business proves very slow, they are forced to cut prices and offer a shine for three, or even two, cents. Often they try to sell papers on the side. In license cities they must therefore take out two separate licenses.

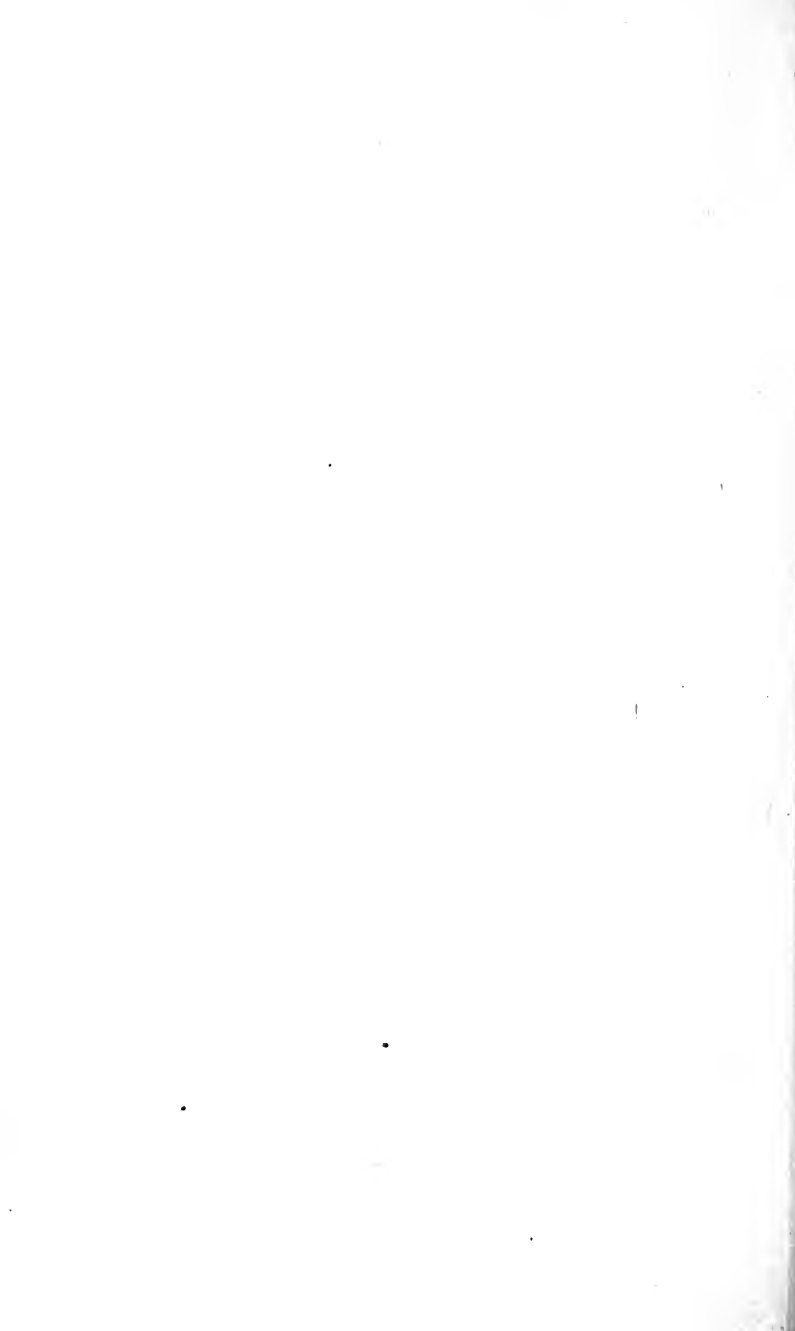
When trade is brisk, shining shoes is far



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## Saturday-Night "Shiners"

*See page 136*



more profitable than selling papers. In fact, the money received for bootblackening is all profit. The shine-box is easily made at home. No investment is needed for daily "stakes" beyond the cost of blacking, which is very inexpensive and represents a stock that can be watered indefinitely. On those rare days when gutter polishing is profitable, boys make from fifty cents to a dollar and fifty cents a day. Hence the persistency with which they cling to an occupation quite unnecessary since the advent of the bootblack parlors.

Young as many of these bootblacks are, they remain on the streets very late at night in order to catch the theater crowds. Such people are very proper in the matter of getting their shoes polished in honor of the Sabbath, believing that "a gentleman is no gentleman until he has his shoes shined."

Bootblackening has absolutely no educational value. It is extremely undignified. It compels the worker to get down on his knees—often in the gutter—in order to shine unmo-

lest by the police. I remember one boy who was brought to court for shining on the sidewalk abutting a railroad station. The company considered this sidewalk its private property. Lingering there constituted a trespass. The boy was permitted by the court to put a question to the special officer of the company.

"Can't I shine on the sidewalk?" he asked.

The officer said "No."

"Can I shine on the street?"

"No."

"Where can I shine?"

"In the gutter," was his answer.

Simple-minded peasant boys from Europe who join the ranks of the street workers are likely to get queer notions of America when they are thus deliberately forced into the gutter. In some cities, the gutter rule applies to newsboys, bootblacks and peddlers alike.

Contrary to the testimony of a police officer, these immigrant bootblacks are not a "happy lot." I recall one who approached me with this question: "Can't you find me a job?"



"How about shining shoes? I thought you liked that," I said to him.

"Shining shoes disturbs me," he answered.

This boy was not satisfied until he entered the High School of Commerce and began a systematic course of training for a business career.

We next come to consider messenger boys, called by the Chicago Vice Commission the typical "night children" of the streets.

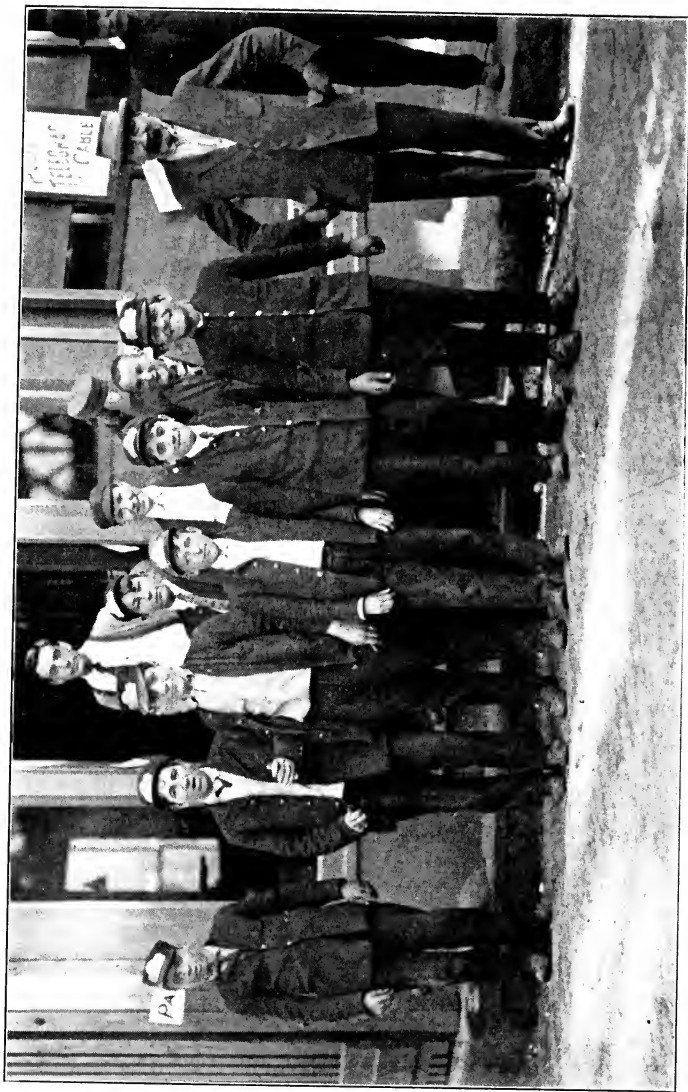
At a hearing on a bill to prohibit young boys from working as night messengers, representatives of various telegraph companies professed to appear in behalf of these boys. They offered the following objections to the bill: In the first place, they had never known or heard of the conditions revealed by the testimony before the legislative committee. In the second place, they declared that if the conditions were bad, they were just as harmful for grown-ups as they were for boys and that, therefore, nothing was gained by keeping boys out of it. Again, they argued, "Why not do away with

vice resorts instead of attempting to prohibit boys from working at night?"

These arguments must have completely convinced the committee. The bill passed.

According to the Census of 1910, there are about eighty-six hundred messenger, office and bundle boys in the employ of the telephone and telegraph companies, and over eighty thousand in trade. The Census classifies messenger boys with office and bundle boys, but they are more nearly related to newsboys and boot-blacks. While they are not working for themselves in the sense that newsboys are, nevertheless, they spend most of their time on the streets. Indeed, they are subject to even greater temptations than most street vendors. The worst pitfalls are due to the night service.

There are twelve States in the Union which have, to date, no time or age limits for night messenger service. Thirty States permit messenger boys eighteen to twenty-one years old to work after ten o'clock at night, and eighteen allow boys of sixteen to eighteen to work be-



*Photograph by Louis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## **The Night Shift**



tween seven and ten. There is much hope in the fact that seven States have already established the minimum age limit of twenty-one years. New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Kentucky forbid messenger boys under twenty-one to work after ten o'clock at night. The model law, urged by the National Child Labor Committee and already adopted in Wisconsin, prohibits boys under twenty-one from being used as messengers after eight o'clock. This should be our national standard.

This model law, unlike the model newsboy law, aims not merely to regulate but totally to prohibit, night work.

There was a time when the work of the messenger boy, like that of the newsboy, seemed justified on grounds of promotion. It was said that the messenger boy eventually became a telegrapher and the newsboy, a printer. In the language of the boys, "there's nothing to it." Newsboys everywhere complain that they do not get a "look-in" as apprentices. The mes-

senger boy can become a telegrapher only by leaving the service and going to a school for training. Indeed, until the establishment of continuation schools, almost the only way either a newsboy or messenger could get any vocational training was to stay in the trade long enough to get arrested and "sent up" to a reform school. This fact alone proves that messenger service, particularly night service, leads not to telegraphy, but rather to delinquency.

The influence of night messengers on street boys is another very good reason for stringent prohibition. It is like the influence exercised by boys fresh from the truant or reform school. The messenger speaks as one coming from a new world—the underworld. The more innocent ones refer to him as the "wise guy who knows a lot."

Perhaps the messenger boy's greatest weakness is stealing bicycles. A bicycle is a real necessity to him, and he cannot save enough from his earnings to buy one. Therefore he makes off with the first one he can lay his hands

on. This is an interesting comment on the wages as well as the needs of the work.

The messenger boy, in a sense, defeats the original purpose of the messenger service. It often takes longer for a message to be delivered from the telegraph office to the addressee than it takes to get it over the wire. Suppose all telephone calls were first received at a central office and then delivered by a messenger boy! That is exactly what is being done with telegrams. Why not have a universal, instead of an occasional, system of telephoning telegrams? It does seem as though the inventive genius that made the telegraph possible might have gone one step further and, as in the case of the telephone, have brought the telegram directly within reach of the addressee. In this way, we might have been spared not only the original messenger boy, but also his numerous companions who become subject to the many abuses of the night service.

The types described thus far are not uncommon in current literature. They have all re-

ceived more or less recognition in child labor legislation. But there are subtler phases of child labor in city streets which are fully as dangerous and yet completely outside the pale of the law. Among these neglected occupations are wood-picking, baggage-carrying, scavenging, and the like.

Wood-pickers are neither wage-earners, like messenger boys, nor "merchant princes," like newsboys. Perhaps that is why they do not appear in the Census among those gainfully employed. Their work more nearly resembles the time-honored chore of supplying the kitchen with fuel. But prolonged tramping over miles of city streets in search of wooden boxes is a far cry from a trip to the woodpile.

It is urged that necessity, in the name of which child labor has been tolerated so long, justifies wood-picking. Coal is always high when it is most needed, and kindling-wood is a luxury. Moreover, tenement dwellers who are in the habit of sending their children out for wood do not live in steam-heated flats. The



privilege of cooking by gas is not within their means. Throughout the entire winter season, they practically live in the kitchen. It is the function of the wood-pickers to keep the fire from dying out. Delivery boxes are their main asset. A torn-down building is a boon. But the supply is by no means regular or lasting. When nothing is given away free and the fire is about to go out, then the wood-picker is obliged to help himself.

Another neglected phase of street work is baggage-carrying. "Bag-boys" loiter about railway stations and subway exits at all hours, always ready and anxious to carry a traveling bag or suitcase for a tip. Very often the unsuccessful newsboy degenerates into a bag boy. At regular intervals, he is chased away by the special officer on the ground that he is trespassing on the company's premises. The law otherwise fails to reach him.

The dangers in all these street occupations to the health, education and morals of children have not received sufficient attention. For

some time, the statement that street work did boys more harm than good did not excite any concern. Investigations had to show in black and white that a large number were physically injured or morally ruined before the Legislature would even listen. It counted for nothing that these occupations nowise educated a boy, that they did not develop his faculties, exercise his mind or stir his imagination. Some communities are at last waking up to a fuller realization of the positive life values, especially as they relate to vocational fitness.

We need to be reminded that street work engages children at the most critical period of life, the period of adolescence. All physical and mental processes are accelerated during these years. Special tendencies are manifested in both sexes. Tubercular disorders, internal diseases and peculiar disturbances of the nervous system are likely to arise during these years of premature toil. The hurry in which a street worker eats his lunch and the unwholesomeness and inadequacy of the food cannot but un-

dermine his digestive system. A child who has no time for play is too busy to grow. Moreover, the rush and excitement of street work are likely to materially affect the nervous system.

These dangers should receive the immediate and earnest attention of every enlightened community. Neither can the State afford to ignore them. It should take pains to care for these children and should protect them from the dangers of the street—their workshop—as it does employees in other dangerous occupations.

Street accidents are especially common among working children. The most painful recollections from my years of street supervision are of boys who were run over by electric cars or express wagons. I recall a newsboy who was awaiting the newspaper train. It came sooner than he expected. He was on the wrong side of the track and attempted to cross—too late. I recall another newsboy who fell while trying to board a car. He was seriously injured and was laid up in the hospital for

two months. Many street-workers are permanently crippled in such ways.

Often, the nature of the accident affects the boy's mind. Many a bad boy's troubles can be traced to maladies resulting from serious misadventure. For instance, a fall producing concussion of the brain may explain a bad boy more fully than the theory of juvenile depravity. The extent to which moral effects are bound up with physical dangers has not been sufficiently appreciated outside the four walls of the psychopathic hospital.

I know a newsboy who was run over by an express wagon while crossing the street. He was in the hospital several weeks and returned to his corner on borrowed crutches. The next day, a stranger took pity on him and bought him a new pair. The boy found that his tips became unusually large. It was clear to him that the crutches paid. He was reluctant to give them up in spite of orders from the nurse to do so. He became an incorrigible beggar.

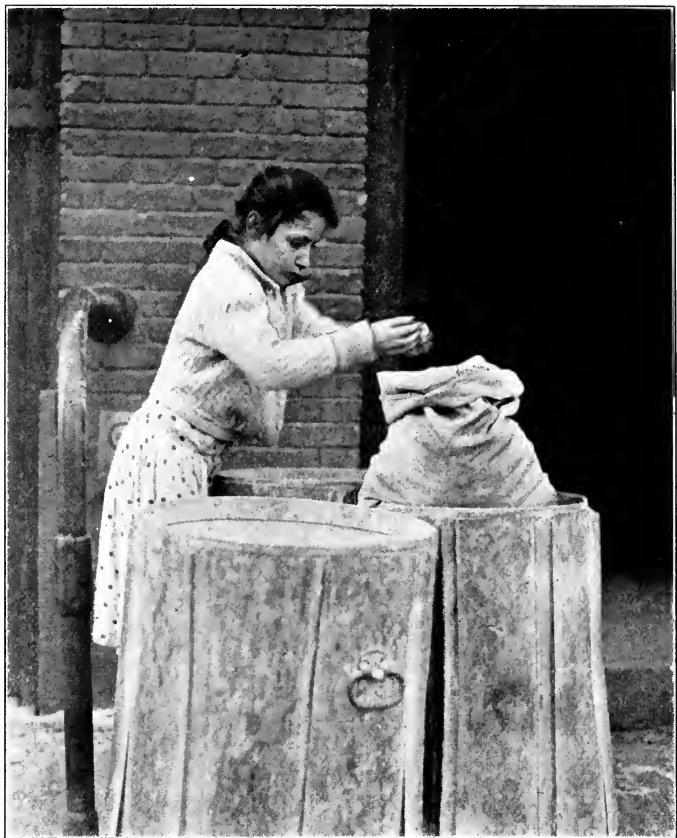
Some of the educational effects of street

work on children are obvious. The sleepy-heads of the ungraded classes are recruited not only from those who frequent the moving picture shows, but also from those who cater to the needs of the moving picture crowds outside. Selling, shining or scavenging late at night or early in the morning is not a fit preparation for school tasks.

The overworked street boy is a truant in the making. Premature toil encourages truancy in a double sense—breaking away from home as well as school. It starts the child on the road to vagrancy. Home desertion, while less known than school desertion, is even worse. The moment a boy becomes conscious of his ability to shift for himself, he assumes a false air of independence and frequently leaves home. When the father who is aging begins to look to his son for contributions to the family budget, he gets no response. There is a strain on all natural ties. This new demand on the growing boy creates difficulties from which he is often only too glad to escape.

Pressing into industrial or commercial service children who are neither physically nor mentally fit for work invites these difficulties. Child labor leads to drifting. The boy who is hired on Monday, tired on Tuesday and fired on Wednesday illustrates drifting at its worst. The greatest danger of premature toil is premature idleness. There are altogether too many children under sixteen at work and altogether too many children over sixteen loafing. The misemployed of today become not only the unemployed, but the unemployables, of tomorrow.

Enlightened public opinion in this country would unquestionably support child labor and compulsory education legislation which would spare children under sixteen years of age from every form of servitude. But the time is coming when society, for its own protection, will regard the age of twenty-one as the really strategic turning point in the career of all men and women. Up to that point, life will be not an academic, but an active, preparation for useful



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## Fighting the Coal Trust





manhood and womanhood. The experience and testimony of parents and teachers everywhere will bear out the statement that it is the next twenty-one years in life, and not the first, which comprehend all success, great and small, and that the broader and deeper the early foundations are laid the greater is the ultimate success.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHILD WORKERS AND VAGRANTS

*Patsy's career — Relation of child workers to vagrants — Vagrants in law and fact — Three types of vagrants: (1) The vagrant in embryo, (2) The full-fledged vagrant, (3) The incorrigible vagrant — Causes of vagrancy — Results of child labor in England — Effects of premature factory work on health — Effects on habits of industry — Street work and vagrancy — The vagrant's defense.*

EVERY poor mother knows that the earlier children begin to work, the earlier they begin to loaf. This loafing is euphemistically called "walking the bricks;" that is, hunting a job or plain "bumming"—the beginning of vagrancy.

Patsy—American for Pasquale—always takes serious issue with his mother for calling him "bum." Though he has been out of work a long time, he is American enough to know that "bum" is hardly the word for him. He began his industrial career very young.

At the age of five he was sent out every morning to collect stale bread at the restaurants.

I took him home one day and found his father, a man of forty-two, toasting his feet by the stove. I inquired why he did not go to work instead of working Patsy. He answered that he began at Patsy's age. Most of his life he was a pick-and-shovel man. Now he is all played out and everybody says, "you too old." Therefore it is the son's turn to work.

Patsy left school at the age of fourteen and entered a biscuit factory. One day he caught his right hand in a dough machine and lost three fingers. He has been loafing on the streets for more than a year "waiting for his case to come up."

The prospect of getting a large sum of money for damages on account of a shop accident has made many an industrious boy a corner loafer. Both the accident and its effects are often the inevitable result of premature toil. Thus child labor, however well intentioned, defeats its own ends.

Patsy is not a vagrant in the strict legal sense. He could hardly be arrested under the vagrancy law. But if a vagrant in the ordinary sense is a street wanderer without course or compass,

“Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among  
The unfenced region of society,”

Patsy is certainly on the high road to vagrancy. What with being unfit for several kinds of employment because of the accident, and the inclination to wait for his case to come up, he may, in the end, qualify even under the statute.

England, which first experimented with child labor, never fully realized its dangers until the Boer War. Later Parliamentary investigations of unemployed and unemployables also revealed them with ruthless clearness. It would not be strange if this country, in spite of its being daily reënforced by the flower of youth from the strong nations of Europe, should some day have a similar awakening.

Our two million working children suggest to

us that we, too, are prone to be penny wise in our eagerness to "cash in" the gifts of childhood. Those who are daily testing child labor (whether in factories or streets) by its results have become convinced that many a vagrant is either the father of a working child or the child itself "gone to seed." Child worker and vagrant too often represent the beginning and end of an unwise factory or street career. Not every vagrant of today is necessarily a child worker of yesterday; but a study of the causes of vagrancy and the effects of child labor shows a relation hitherto generally overlooked. They are not only related, but seem to explain each other.

All vagrants look alike to the police officer. His policy in the past was everywhere the same,—to "vag 'em," or, in other words, arrest them on a charge of vagrancy and commit them or send them on to the next town, if possible. To sustain his charge under the law, the officer had to prove that his man belonged to one of the following classes:

Idle persons who, not having visible means of support, are living without lawful employment;

Persons wandering abroad and begging, or who go about from door to door, or place themselves in the streets, highways, passages or other public places to beg or receive alms;

Persons wandering abroad and visiting tippling shops or houses of ill-fame, or lodging in groceries, outhouses, market-places, sheds, barns or in the open air, and not giving a good account of themselves.

This feeble attempt at the classification of vagrants in American statutes of today marks the advance made since the passage of the old English statute in which vagrants were poetically described as "persons who wake on the night and sleep on the day, and haunt customable taverns and alehouses and rout about; and no man wot from whence they come nor whither they go."

"No man wot from whence they come nor whither they go," is a naïve confession of ignorance not found in modern statutes.

Officially, vagrants have always been dealt with *en masse*. All studies in print, with a few worthy exceptions, deal with them in terms of figures and percentages, much as the present literature on immigration treats our immigrants. But you cannot indict a class any more than you can indict a nation.

Vagrants are not only human, but altogether too common, if they are rightly classed as "idle persons who, not having visible means of support, are living without lawful employment." Leave out the word "lawful" and then ask yourself if many persons you know do not come dangerously near answering the description.

Their past industrial careers, if analyzed, would throw much light on their present vagrant positions. A study of every vagrant's life brings one to the inevitable conclusion that the roots of vagrancy are deeply imbedded in distorted childhood.

Here are the stories of three flesh-and-blood vagrants. They illustrate the types commonly accepted in the underworld: the "hobo"

who "wants work," the tramp who "won't work" and the "bum" who "can't work." P. B. is a young man who tramped much in a vain search for work—a "hobo" or vagrant in embryo. J. K. is a man of middle age who traveled extensively pretending to look for work but gradually succumbing to the wanderlust—a tramp or full-fledged vagrant. M. W., on the other hand, is an old man who could not work if he would—a true "bum" or incorrigible vagrant. Their stories represent three distinct stages of vagrancy and approximately describe the classes outlined in the statutes.

I made the acquaintance of these men at the Wayfarers' Lodge, their temporary home. But it is natural that the first one should have made his headquarters at a free employment office; the second, in a municipal lodging house; the third, in a pauper institution.

P. B., an Italian, eighteen years old, was born in New York. Having no brothers or sisters, he was left alone in the world at the age of eleven, when his parents died. He left school



immediately and sold papers, living in the Newsboys' Lodging House until he was sixteen. Then he entered a mill. While at work, he "smashed" his thumb. After four months in the hospital, he found occasional work as a farm hand. He tramped from town to town looking for steady employment—without success.

One cold night in January, he "beat" his way from Providence to Boston on a freight train. After an all-night freeze, he woke up to find himself in a box-car which had been side-tracked. He emerged penniless. He hung about employment offices by day and slept in the Wayfarers' Lodge at night, glad to saw wood for hard tack and soup in the morning—often his only meal. Soon he was turned out of the Lodge—the home of the homeless—and reduced to begging for both food and shelter. In this condition I found him, a vagrant in embryo.

J. K. is Irish, twenty-seven years old. He was born in Hudson, Massachusetts. When

he was eight months old his father died, leaving a large family. At the age of five, J. entered school. He suffered from continuous eye-strain until the age of thirteen, when he turned blind. An operation restored sight to the left eye only. He returned to school and was graduated. He had sold papers ever since he was six years old. At fifteen he became a bell boy. He traveled all over New England and back and forth from Maine to Florida. At nineteen he entered a pulp mill. After drifting from mill to mill, he finally came to Boston. I met him, too, at the Wayfarers' Lodge. On learning his story, I "loaned" him money to return home. A week later I found him in the "drunk" pen of a Boston court—the last I ever saw of him. Clearly he was a full-fledged vagrant.

M. W. is sixty years old, born of American parents in South Boston. His father was a machinist. He fractured his leg and died when M. was ten years old. The boy attended school regularly and never "hooked jack" ex-

cept one day when he went to see the sudden overflow of Stony Brook. At thirteen he was graduated from the grammar school. His first work was as cash boy. Then he became bundle boy, tobacco stripper and, finally, meat cutter at six hundred dollars a year. He married at the age of twenty-seven. Eight months later the meat market burned down. He turned common laborer and drifted from city to country, doing haying and chores for his keep and leaving his wife uncared for.

After tramping all over New England, he returned to Boston. He slept on the Common and begged for food. For some time, he was suspected by the police. Finally, he was arrested in a raid made on the Wayfarers' Lodge and sent to the State Farm for six months. Later he was sent for eighteen months, and again for two years. When I saw him, he was wintering at the Lodge, washing dishes for "feed and bunk," expecting to be turned out into the street in the spring and, eventually, to be sent to the State Farm.

"As you look over your past," I asked him, "what do you think was your main trouble?"

"No trade," he answered positively. But I know from other sources that drink had much to do with it.

What are the causes of vagrancy as revealed in these three life studies: No trade? Unemployment? Accident? Drink? Clearly the causes are diverse and many: some primary, some secondary, and all so intricately combined that disentanglement is almost impossible.

One thing is certain: All three tasted the bitter-sweets of adversity quite early in life, at the age intended for growth and play and the pure joy of living. Each one began work in strict adherence to the American policy of starting early in life. Moreover, no one of them was prepared for work in any general or special school. Neither their street nor factory apprenticeship fitted them for any life calling.

I talked with each man about his education. It was practically the same in all cases,—the

three R's in various combinations. Yet one had been educated more than half a century ago and in Boston; another a quarter of a century ago and in the country; and the third but a decade ago and in New York.

Each was born in a totally different industrial situation. But they all started early, too early. Small wonder they all failed. It would have been surprising if they had not.

An important study of vagrants, made by the acting superintendent of the New York municipal lodging house, throws new light on the causes of vagrancy. Of the two thousand men examined, the majority were found to be in the "very prime of life." One hundred were under the age of twenty-one. A large number of these men were unemployable because of defective mentality or physical disability. A greater number could not find work because they had no trade. Very few were found to be habitual loafers and confirmed beggars. The most significant fact is that most of these vagrants came neither from the country nor

from abroad, but were finished products of city life.

Now let us turn from the causes of vagrancy to the effects of child labor. These effects were first felt in England, where children were permitted to be pressed into industrial service long before America was fully established as a nation.

As early as 1796, the physicians of Manchester, acting as a Board of Health, passed the following resolution:

“Resolved: That the large factories are generally injurious to the constitution of the children employed in them, from the close confinement which is enjoined, from the debilitating effects of hot and impure air and from want of active exercises which nature points out as essential in childhood and youth to invigorate the system and to fit our species for the employments and for the duties of manhood. The untimely labor of the night and the protracted labor of the day, with respect to children, not only tend to diminish future expectations as to the general sum of life and industry by impairing the strength and destroying the vital

stamina of the rising generation, but it too often gives encouragement to idleness, extravagance and profligacy in parents, who, "contrary to the order of nature, subsist by the oppression of their offspring."

England had been thus cautioned before it was too late. Men well qualified to speak had advised her that if her little children were allowed to work she might soon have to reckon not only with a class of worn-out workmen on the brink of vagrancy, but also with an increased vagrant and pauper class recruited from the parents whom the children were forced to subsidize by their labor.

England paid little heed to the solemn warning. The whole body of child-labor legislation from 1796 (when the Manchester Board of Health wisely demanded a "general system of laws") to the Boer War presents a series of palliatives which only mitigated the evil.

What was the result? The blow that the wise men had foreseen fell with the Boer War. In one day, it seemed, the whole nation awoke

to the fact that its physical vigor was appreciably sapped. It had no material for soldiers. The percentage of rejections at the enlistment stations was appalling. A London newspaper asserted that, of eleven thousand men examined in Manchester, ten thousand were rejected. The standards were lowered, the tests made easier; but the rejections continued. "Regiments were patched together of boys and anæmic youths. They were food for the hospitals, not for powder. Once in South Africa, enteric swept them off like flies; they were only the shells of men. . . . The English had always trusted so implicitly in their traditional physical stamina. But a changē, tremendous but unnoted, had gone on in the habits and stamina and physical type," of Englishmen, the cumulative effects of which the war made plain.

Had not the Manchester physicians foretold these results in 1796? Had not Lord Macaulay prophesied the same results in 1846, when he said to his countrymen, "Your overworked boys will become a feeble and ignoble race of



men, the parents of a more feeble progeny”?

This country which, according to Emerson, has always imitated England—often at its worst as in this matter of child labor—may yet awake to a similar situation if its two million working children are not given better protection, more training, more care. The National Government has thus far done nothing more than to count them. We have not even begun to reckon the costs of child labor.

What will its effects be upon the health of the children and their future in industry? Will they be more productive, more efficient, because of their early start? Or will their premature toil “tend to diminish future expectations as to the general sum of life and industry by impairing their strength and destroying their vital stamina,” as was prophesied by the Manchester physicians?

Unfortunately, there is very little scientific data in this country touching this most important phase of child labor. If we should ask the Government for information on this

subject we should probably be referred to a report of the Bureau of Labor issued in 1904.

This report "relates the employment of children under sixteen years of age: their earnings, the hours of labor required of them and other conditions affecting their well-being." Fifteen thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven children, found in two hundred and fifteen selected establishments located in the thirteen leading industrial States of the Union, are the subject of this report. Concerning health, it says:

"Many of the children seen in the establishments visited appeared to be undersized,—the pinched, worn faces, the thin arms, the puny bodies of many of them giving evidence that they were of underweight. Among the children reported, many were physically unfit for the labor required of them. A few who began work before they were ten years old, though not actually broken down, were at the age of fifteen so worn out, their energies so far exhausted, that advancement in productive power much beyond the point already reached seemed

quite improbable unless a period of complete rest should intervene."

Again, under "Conditions Affecting Children," the report shows in detail the sinister effects on the health of working children of long hours, unsanitary and unsafe factory conditions and the dangers of certain occupations to life and limb.

Next in importance to this federal report is that of the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education. This report presents the results of an investigation conducted in forty-three cities and towns of Massachusetts for the purpose of determining what working children from fourteen to sixteen years of age were doing, and what the educational and economic value of these years *had been* and *might have been* to them. Five thousand four hundred and ninety-five of the twenty-five thousand children between fourteen and sixteen at work or idle were followed into three thousand one hundred and fifty-seven homes and three hundred and fifty-four estab-

lishments representing fifty-five selected industries. Thirty-three and one-third per cent. of these children were found in unskilled industries and sixty-five per cent. in low-grade industries.

More than one thousand of these boys and girls had worked for two firms, and almost one thousand for three or more firms, within less than two years. Out of about a thousand children who left their first employment, more than half did so in less than a year. Premature fatigue, lack of skill and low wages were found to be partly responsible for this drifting from job to job.

Think of the effect upon the child of such constant shifting and waywardness! The so-called habit of work, by which child labor is so often justified, will hardly stand by him in later years. It is therefore not at all surprising that he has a strong distaste for work in the very prime of life.

The effects, then, of premature toil are well calculated to produce a class of men whose ill

health and shiftlessness would naturally predispose them to vagrancy in its diverse forms.

There is another effect of untimely wage-earning, or money-making, especially characteristic of street trades. It is the sudden realization of responsibility following a prolonged period of drift. This effect is felt most keenly during the transition from boyhood to manhood, the post-adolescent period, when the street worker wakes up to find that he is no longer a "kid," but a man entitled to a man's wage. Neither his work nor the income answers his new demands.

He begins to look for something better. Everywhere he is asked, "What can you do?" His ready answer is "I am willing to do anything." But he is told that, while he may be willing enough, he cannot be engaged because he has not the training or skill required of an employee expecting a man's wage. Then he begins to drift, taking one odd job after another, often a dozen different jobs during the year. He becomes what they call in England

a "casual." For weeks, often for months, while he is waiting for more work to turn up, he loafes about on the streets. Frequent recurrences of these unemployment intervals sooner or later force him to the lowest levels of industry, where the unemployed and the unemployable hopelessly merge. He takes to the street, often to the road, a full-fledged vagrant.

Many a street worker passes through a critical period of a different sort and does not always come out victor. Having had enough of street work, he resolves to "settle down,"—generally at the exhortation of his parents. He finds some factory or office work and bravely attempts to adjust himself to the indoor life. But all the early habits of street life work against him. He longs for the freedom, the crowds, the changing scenes, the frequent surprises and adventures. A factory seems like a prison from which the street is the only escape. Many a boy throws up one job after another until he has tamed his vagrant spirit and made the perilous transition from street

to factory. But some boys fail in the attempt.

Abe recalls how he deserted the Special Newsboys' School which flourished in Boston in the days when selling papers seemed more important than schooling, even in the Athens of America. This school had been opened for the convenience of children who were working on the streets. Instruction was given during the hours when business was at a standstill.

Abe had no use even for this part-time school. He preferred the streets to school and home. For twenty years, he was engaged in street work of one form or another. He delivered papers and sold them on street corners. Later he paid children to sell for him. Before long, he became assistant circulation manager having full charge of all the sellers and carriers of one of the largest newspapers in New England.

Abe was very bright and credited with a good business head. He made friends with a large number of business men of high standing. From time to time, he was offered prom-

ising business openings. Against his instinct, he began to consider them seriously when he faced the question of marrying. He tried one position after another only to find that he could not stand the confinement. This is exactly what he had suspected and what all his street comrades prophesied. After many brave attempts to stay away, Abe is back on the street, glad to have his old newspaper job again. This position pays him as much as any previous business opening; but the point is, he could not have made the change if he would. The call of the street was irresistible.

I recall the pathetic case of a young man who began his life career as a "puller-in" in front of a pawn-shop. The work of a puller-in is not without its fascination for the boy born and bred in Street-Land. Max kept at it for many years in spite of its ill-repute. The day came when the shop was given up. Max found himself without a job and without preparation for any other work. His face and physique were against him. After many futile



attempts to find something he could do, he returned to the old corner and settled down to a characteristic vagrant life. He became a corner fixture well known to everybody in the neighborhood. It was not until a "high-class" pawn-shop of the new type was established on the corner that Max managed to get another position as puller-in,—this time in the disguise of door-tender.

Whether we consider the facts in the light of a vagrant's past or in that of a child worker's future, we are forced to recognize that at least certain causes of vagrancy correspond almost exactly with certain effects of child labor. The cumulative evidence gathered in the last ten years by the National Child Labor Committee points to the same conclusion.

The vagrant himself, if allowed to sum up his case, could reasonably make this appeal:—

"Friends, you have permitted me in youth to squander my resources instead of conserving them. You have encouraged me to sell papers and shine shoes since I was but a little child.

You have even tipped me liberally, meaning to be good to me. In the meantime I grew up without a trade, and now I am at the dead end of a blind alley. I am not as energetic as I was. My parents have long disowned me. I can't make a living. I have therefore come to the conclusion that the world owes me a living."

And the typical vagrant, in the language of a newspaper man, is one who "so thoroughly believes the world owes him a living that he always manages somehow to collect the debt."

The usual remedies for vagrancy, such as wood-yards, wayfarers' lodges and short-term sentences at workhouses, do not interest us here. If it be true that vagrancy is often the anticlimax of an unwise and premature industrial career, our main efforts should be directed against such careers which, far from decreasing, are increasing,—especially in the case of child labor on city streets. How to deal with this type of child labor is the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ✓ STREET WORK: THE STORY OF AN EXPERIMENT

*Street work and charity—Inadequacy of early statutes—Police versus truant officers—Supervisor of Licensed Minors—Beginnings of self-government among street workers in Boston—Coöperation of child-saving agencies—System of inspection—Interviews with parents—Toledo Newsboys' Association—Establishment of Boston Newsboys' Republic—Newsboys' Court—Model code for child labor on the streets.*

THE history of the effort to regulate and control the evils of juvenile street work may be summed up in one phrase: "From the sentimental to the sensible." First endeavors were characterized by humanity but were sadly lacking in common sense.

The earliest notion about street-trading children, like that about the poor, was a fixed one. Their existence was taken for granted, such

was the order of things. Their condition, far worse in those days than it is now, was relieved, if at all, out of a sheer sense of pity. No permanent cure was even intended. Prevention, in those days, was still in embryo. Charity to newsboys, like charity to the poor, was typified by Christmas dinners and summer picnics. Tipping was the most popular expression of the sense of pity toward the "poor little waifs." This made many of them beggars in disguise. To excite sympathy, they resorted to tricks, some of which are still in vogue,—such as the lost-dime or the last-paper fiction.

A kindly-disposed public slowly discovered the connection between begging, gambling and smoking. As the number of street-trading children in every city grew, and with them the evils now commonly known, the call for action became louder and stronger. The first instinct, always natural to a self-governing people, was to rush to the Legislature. Statute after statute was enacted in the attempt to check these evils. Curiously enough, however,

nearly all these statutes dealt with effects rather than with causes. They were concerned with the boys much more than with the parents and employers chiefly responsible for their selling. These statutes, therefore, were unenforceable against the worst sinners.

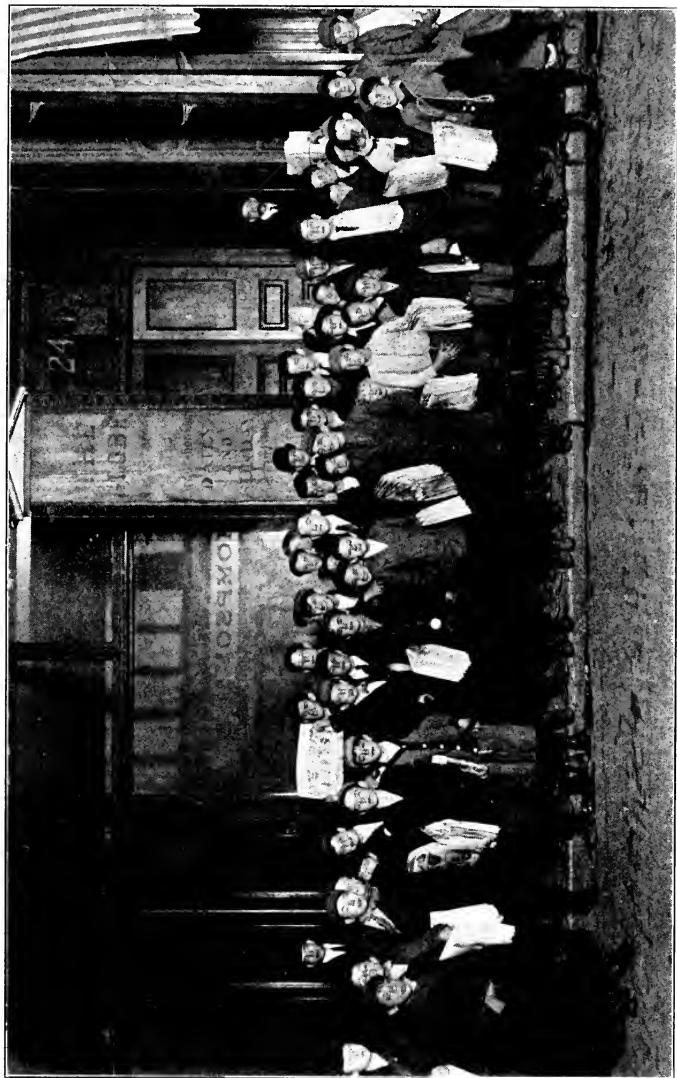
This was not the only difficulty with the statutes. The immediate practical drawback was that there were no specific provisions for their enforcement. The police force was supposed to look after the matter. The fact that the children for whom these statutes were mainly intended were the care of the school department rather than the police department apparently passed unnoticed by the legislators. But the police officers were keen enough to see the point. They contended that since the majority of the children working in the streets were school children, the matter should be left to the truant officers. Much time was lost during a period of circumlocution between the two. Indeed, though this idea of educational versus penal control is absolutely sound, it is

still a bone of contention between the police and truant departments in many backward cities.

As a matter of common sense, police officers ought not to be given the special care of school children trading in the streets, even if they are willing to undertake it. They are not fitted for such work. It requires a kind of training which police officers do not have. School children should be handled in an educational and not in a penal manner. This is in accord with the new view of the child. The conduct of school children on the streets, whether at work or play, ought to relate itself somehow to their school work.

In the language of a police commissioner, "when a police officer sees a violation of law, even by a small boy, the only thing for him to do is to take that boy to court." No police officer, strictly speaking, has any discretionary power, nor can he properly extenuate the circumstances in any way.

Much time was also lost in discussion between the school department and the factory



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

5 o'clock Sunday Morning in "Newspaper Row"





inspection department. The factory inspectors argued in much the same way as the police officers.

In the meantime, these early statutes, however well intended, remained unenforced most of the time. Every now and then, newspaper districts and markets were raided just as vice districts used to be,—and with as much effect. A squad of officers, either police in plain clothes or truant officers, went out in hot pursuit of the street vendors. This plan was tried in different cities, always on the spur of the moment and almost always after investigations had aroused public opinion.

The results of these raids were instantaneous but short-lived. The discovery was soon made that a man, or body of men, appointed in the heat of a campaign for certain work is apt to keep at that work as long as the campaign is hot. The moment it cools off, however, or is swept aside by another campaign, the squad is detailed on another job.

Finally after years of blundering, it occurred

to the friends of street children in Boston that the thing to do was to organize a special department under the authority of the School Committee and charge it with the enforcement of street-trade laws especially affecting school children.

Adopting this plan, the Boston School Committee created the office of Supervisor of Licensed Minors in 1906. His chief duty was to enforce the regulations covering all licensed minors. It was understood at the outset that the Supervisor was not to go at his work independently or single-handed. He was expected to seek the co-operation of all agencies dealing with this class of children. Only by so doing could he hope to cover the field. Parents, teachers, truant officers, police officers, probation officers, news agents, street-car conductors and the public in general were asked to help. It was the business of the Supervisor to see that they did help. If they did not, he was to discover the reasons, if any existed, and remove them.

Other functions of the Supervisor of Licensed Minors were largely the outcome of the needs of the work. First of all, he was placed in full control of the license system and made responsible for its many details. All applications for licenses were to be investigated and passed upon by him before being recommended to the School Board. A fair average of attendance, conduct and scholarship was insisted upon in all cases. The health of every applicant was taken into consideration. The licenses of minors who fell below these standards were to be either suspended or revoked on recommendation of the Supervisor. Flagrant offenders of the law were to be taken by him to the Juvenile Court. For such purposes, the Supervisor was clothed with the powers of truant officer and constable. His most important work was to make frequent home and school visits and street inspections in order to keep in touch with the licensed minors through the different channels of the home, the school and the street.

It was clear at the outset that successful supervision of street work depended largely upon a better system of licensing minors and of enforcing license laws. But it was even more clear that nearly everything depended upon the spirit of the boys themselves. Therefore it seemed especially necessary to create an *esprit de corps* among them. Every worker with boys knows that if he has the boys with him he can do everything and that without them he can do nothing. The Supervisor started out on the assumption that the best way to enforce the law was to get the boys to enforce it themselves. His first move was to present the regulations in simple language and advise the boys to adopt them one by one as their own.

Boys usually will accept all rules and regulations which are just and reject all those which are unjust. There was, then, no reason for fearing that they would not adopt them. Why not, pray, test the justice of our laws by consulting those for whom they are intended, even when they apply to newsboys

and bootblacks? Is not this, after all, the fundamental difference between tyranny and democracy? As a matter of fact, whenever boys in a school or on a playground are given a chance to make their own rules, they prove to be more strict, yet more workable, than any rules imposed upon them from without. And once you get boys to feel that the rules are of their own making, you will find that they tolerate no breaking.

The idea of being consulted made the boys enthusiastic and put initiative into them. Largely of their own accord, they petitioned the School Board to raise the age for selling papers from ten to eleven and for shining shoes from ten to twelve. They also petitioned in favor of changing the time limit for night work from ten o'clock to eight.

With the help of the newsboys the license system was entirely reorganized. New forms of applications and badges were devised to meet the many technical difficulties of the law. The new badge, now in use in many cities, has the

essence of the law printed on its face and the boy's name, home address and school in his own handwriting on the back. The badge thus serves a double purpose,—as a daily reminder of the law and an immediate and absolute identification of the licensee.

The methods of enforcement were strengthened by gradually winning the coöperation of newspaper men, by enlisting the older boys and, when necessary, by securing the aid of the police force and the Juvenile Court. All other child-helping agencies also gladly coöperated.

A system of inspection was put into effect. A schedule was devised covering all schools having ten or more street vendors. Each school was visited once a month; at which time licenses were examined, lost badges replaced, rules discussed and explained, and lapses in conduct and attendance checked. By this method of school inspection, the efficiency of the license system was tested from time to time. The main purposes of the school visits were to report to the schools the street conditions under

which these licensed boys sell and to ascertain through the schools to what extent street conditions influence the attendance, conduct and scholarship of the children.

Home visits were made when cases required the immediate attention of the parents. Frequently parents were invited to the School Committee rooms to be interviewed on serious complaints against their boys. The records show that, in a majority of cases, an interview with the parents was just as effective as taking the boy to court. Of about five hundred cases of specific complaints dealt with in one year, ninety-five per cent. were settled satisfactorily out of court.

The following is a good illustration of this class of case: B was complained of by a newsdealer for striking another newsboy. The second boy accidentally slipped and fell against the window-pane of the newsdealer's store and broke it. The newsdealer insisted on our putting B into court. All parties in the case, including B's parents, were asked to come to the

School Committee rooms to thrash out the matter. At first the newsdealer demanded court proceedings or fifteen dollars indemnity. B's parents were equally anxious to enter court proceedings against the dealer for interfering with their boy's business. Finally the parents agreed to pay five dollars indemnity, provided the newsdealer would waive any further claim and agree not to interfere with their boy's trade. The dealer accepted the offer and the case was settled.

These first-fruits of supervision were obtained during the two years 1906-1908.

Early in 1909, the Supervisor was authorized to visit the principal American cities for the purpose of finding out what was being done elsewhere for children trading in the streets. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, Detroit, Toledo, and many other cities were visited. None of these cities had any effective license system, but some had organized associations for the purpose of combat-



ing the evils of smoking, swearing, begging and gambling. Experience had shown that ready money and its temptations, and the influence of grown-ups, made these evils common among street vendors.

Toledo especially attracted attention because of its methods of dealing with just these evils. The Toledo Newsboys' Association had sixty newsboy captains, each one in charge of a group of newsboys living or selling in a certain district of the city. It was the business of the captains and their lieutenants to see that the boys did not violate the rules which they themselves had approved prior to joining. The Toledo Association had been in existence many years and had produced some splendid types of young men,—among them congressional pages and probation officers. This unique work, conducted by John E. Gunckel, won the support of the members of the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools, as well as a number of public-spirited citizens. The work is now

perpetuated by a one-hundred-thousand-dollar building dedicated to the working boys of the city.

As a result of what was seen, it was recommended to the Boston School Board that the newsboys, who constituted ninety per cent. of the street workers, be organized into a Newsboys' Republic for the double purpose of securing more effective enforcement of the laws and of dealing with evils which were outside the pale of the law.

Immediately upon the approval of this plan by the School Board, elections were held in the leading schools of the city. In each school having ten or more licensed newsboys, one newsboy captain and two lieutenants were elected. These newsboy captains and lieutenants assembled in conference immediately after their election. Upon being installed in office by the Chairman of the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools, they organized themselves into a congress and eagerly entered upon a discussion of the rules and regulations

## STORY OF AN EXPERIMENT 211

governing their trade. This first session came to an abrupt end owing to the irresistible temptation to accept an invitation on the part of the Superintendent of Schools to a luncheon at the City Club.

Many sessions were held afterwards, dealing with the same questions and resulting in the adoption of the following Constitution:

### PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Newsboys' Republic, in order to elevate the conditions of the districts in which we live and, filled with a desire for our mental, physical, social and moral advancement and such other benefits to ourselves and our community as are gained by organizing, do ordain and establish this constitution.

### NAME

This organization shall be known as the Newsboys' Republic.

### OBJECT

The object of this club shall be to elevate the conditions of our surroundings; to derive the benefits that are gained by organizing and for moral, mental, physical and social advance-

ment; and, above all, to enable newsboys to *KEEP OUT OF COURT.*

#### MEMBERSHIP

Newsboys regularly attending school and proving themselves legitimate licensed newsboys shall be eligible to membership, provided they live up to the rules and principles of the organization.

#### OFFICERS

The officers of this Republic shall be: a chief captain, a general secretary and a staff of school captains.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The school captains shall be nominated and elected annually by the members of the Republic in their respective schools, on a day chosen by the Superintendent of Schools, in schools having at least ten newsboys.

The chief captain, general secretary and executive council shall be elected annually by all captains at the first congressional meeting of said captains on the Saturday following election.

#### COMMITTEES

Special committees shall be appointed from

time to time, as occasion requires, by the chief captain.

### MEETINGS

Meetings to be held in accordance with circular letter sent by the chief captain.

The following code was adopted:

Every newsboy

Must fasten his badge to the right breast of his outside garment in such a way that it will be in plain sight all the time and not be covered by his papers.

Must not sell, lend or give his badge to any other boy, or let any other boy have his badge for any purpose.

Must not let any boy who has not been granted a license and given a badge have papers to sell.

Must not allow any boy who has not been granted a license and given a badge to sell for him, or assist him, or go around with him.

Must report at once to the Superintendent the loss of his badge.

Must not sell in or on a street car.

Must not sell during school hours.

Must not sell after eight o'clock at night except on election days.

Must not sell after ten o'clock at night on election days.

Must not stand around with other boys.

Must not allow other boys to stand around with him.

Must not make any unnecessary noise.

Must not disturb or annoy people by teasing them to buy, or in any other way.

Must attend school, both sessions, every day.

Must give up his badge to his school teacher when notified that his license is to be taken away or suspended, or at the end of the time for which it is issued, or before leaving the city if he moves away, or when he gives up selling if he does not intend to sell again.

The following instructions were given the newsboy captains:—

It shall be the duty of the newsboy captains

First: To see that the rules printed on the badge are faithfully kept.

All violations of the license rules must be brought to the attention of the master of the school of which the newsboy is a pupil and, at his direction, must be referred to the Newsboys' Trial Board.

Second: To see that all boys not licensed

## STORY OF AN EXPERIMENT 215

shall not interfere with the business of any licensed newsboy.

In order to discharge these duties in a proper manner, all captains are ordered to have:

### I. WEEKLY INSPECTION ON STREET

Captains shall inspect their respective districts at least once a week and confer with their masters on all cases requiring immediate action.

### II. MONTHLY INSPECTION IN SCHOOL

Captains shall, with the approval of their masters, examine all licenses and badges once a month on a day set by the master. On that day, all boys having anything to do with papers, except those who deliver, must produce a badge. Boys who have lost their badges must get new ones, if their conduct and attendance are satisfactory, or else must stop selling altogether, or until such time as their conduct and attendance improve sufficiently to entitle them to a new badge.

### III. QUARTERLY MEETINGS OF CAPTAINS

Captains shall have quarterly meetings in

January, April, June and September; when all matters relating to the general welfare of the newsboys shall be taken up officially in executive session.

#### IV. ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Captains shall have full charge of the annual Newsboys' Patriotic Celebration which takes place on Bunker Hill Day, the seventeenth of June, and shall see to it that all the members of their respective districts shall be invited to attend this annual gathering; at which time the most important matters relating to the interests of the newsboys as a whole are to be acted upon by the members at large.

Third: To keep in touch with all the newsboys of their districts; to help them out if in trouble, to visit them at their homes if sick—provided, however, they get their masters' approval to do so—and to give them such suggestions and advice from time to time as will enable them to earn more, save more and, above all, **KEEP OUT OF COURT**, one of the highest duties of the Republic.

Having stamped its approval on the forego-



ing rules and regulations, the Newsboys' Republic went on record as emphatically disapproving of smoking, swearing, stealing, begging, lying, gambling and any other conduct unbecoming a Young Citizen.

A membership card in the nature of a declaration of citizenship in this Republic was then worked out in accordance with these suggestions. This card is reproduced below and explains itself.

## MEMBERSHIP CARD.

I approve of the LICENSE RULES.

I disapprove of (1) SMOKING, (2) GAMBLING, or any conduct NOT becoming a YOUNG CITIZEN.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

BADGE No. \_\_\_\_\_

This certifies that the above is a Licensed Newsboy and A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING of the Association.

*The Boston School Newsboys' Association*

The actions of this congress of newsboy captains and lieutenants were ratified by the three thousand newsboys of Boston at their first an-

nual convention, which met at Boston Theater on Bunker Hill Day, June 17, 1908. The founding of the newsboys' camp at Lake Monponset, near Halifax, Massachusetts, dates back to this first convention.

During the following year, many congresses were held by the newsboy captains and lieutenants, the actions of which were ratified at the annual convention of the newsboys on Bunker Hill Day. The Newsboys' Clubhouse was founded at this time.

The newsboy scholarships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Young Men's Christian Association, to parallel that founded at Harvard by the Newsboys' Union, date back to the third annual convention.

It was this 1910 convention which passed the following resolution:

"Whereas so many newsboys get into court every year for petty violations of the laws, either through ignorance or thoughtlessness or failure to realize the consequences, and thereby bring discredit and shame upon themselves,

their families and fellow newsboys, and whereas the majority of the newsboys who thus get into court are mere children, be it

“Resolved: That we, the newsboys of Boston, in mass meeting assembled at Keith’s Theater on Bunker Hill Day, June 17, 1910, do publicly declare in favor of establishing a Newsboys’ Court in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth; which court shall deal with all first offenders against the rules and regulations governing their trade and shall invite the coöperation of all public departments concerned.”

The School Board received the petition graciously, and the secretary was directed to reply to the effect that the Board was heartily in sympathy with the proposed plan and would be glad to have it put into effect.

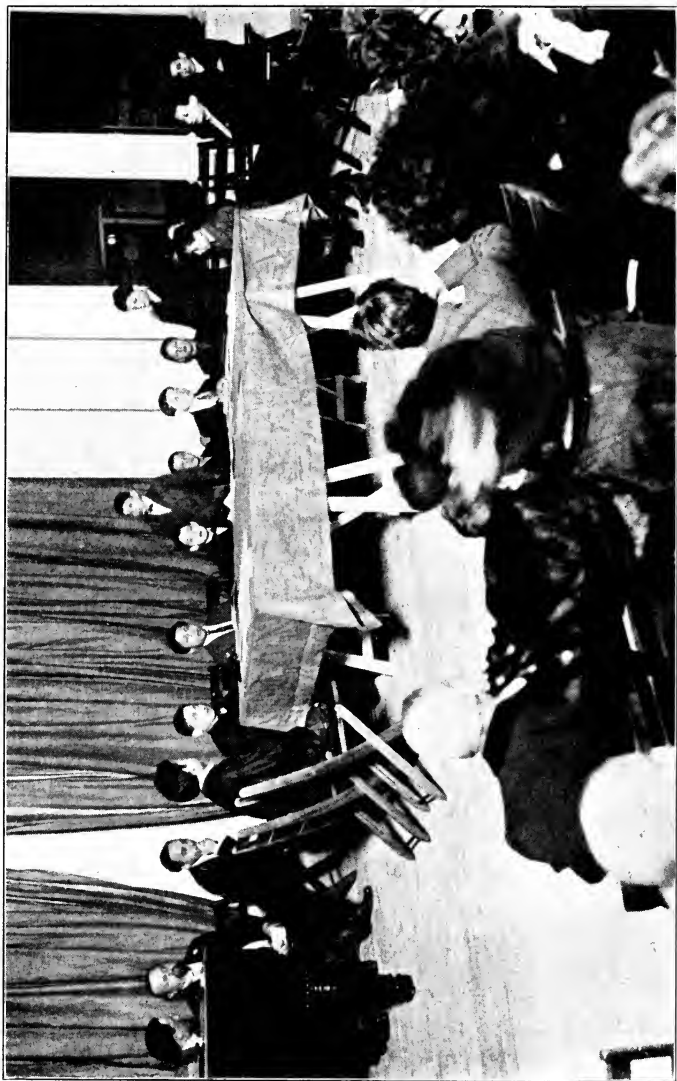
This Newsboys’ Court, the first in the country, was then organized in accordance with the following order issued by the School Committee:

There shall be a Trial Board consisting of five members—two adults, appointed annually by the School Committee for the term of one

year from October 15, 1910, and three newsboys, elected annually from the number of newsboy captains.

The Newsboys' Trial Board has the power to try all cases of violation of the license laws and to pass judgment in accordance with its findings. The sentences take the form of revocation or suspension of the transgressor's license. This court, too, is fond of the probation idea. The importance of the Trial Board lies in the fact that it is democratic. This insures fairness, and thus wins the boy. The judges, themselves newsboys, understand the offender better than a learned judge however well-versed he may be in formal law. Furthermore, the Trial Board saves the boy a court record. The experience in judicial procedure which the judges get is excellent training in self-government. The fact that such service is paid for by the City of Boston adds dignity to the office and the boy.

The interest which this plan of supervision attracted from its inception is an indication of



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Self-Government in Action



the extent of the problem of street work throughout the country and the general search for some method of dealing with it. Soon after the organization of the Newsboys' Republic and the Newsboys' Court, inquiries for information began to come in from many different cities,—from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon; also from Canada and England. Some cities, notably Milwaukee and Birmingham, Alabama, have already adopted the system in whole or in part; and many others are planning to do so.

Ultimately every American city will entirely abolish street trading by school children. Until that time comes, every city can check many of its abuses by such a license system and plan of supervision as here outlined. Self-government is the central feature of the plan. It has even been inaugurated in Sing-Sing by its new warden, Thomas Mott Osborne, who got his inspiration from the George Junior Republic. The Boston Newsboys' Republic also derived inspiration from this source.

So long as we have newsboys, a newsboys' republic founded on democracy in government is far more desirable than police control. It represents the sound principle that the cure for our American democracy is more democracy, especially among the newsboys who are so unjustly persecuted in many large cities.

The Newsboys' Court demonstrates the possibilities of a court for truants. There are thousands of truants in this country who ought never to see the inside of any court.

The chief, perhaps the only, danger is that this plan of supervision may be employed by cities which have not even a minimum of street-trade legislation. The plan would never do as a substitute for effective legislative control of the evils of child labor in city streets, although it does add effective finishing touches to a license system founded on sound legal standards.

Such basic standards are all best expressed in terms of the model child labor law rewritten



with special reference to street trades. Such a law should embody the following principles:

Street labor should be prohibited

(1) For all male children under the age of fourteen, and for girls under the age of sixteen;

(2) For all male children under sixteen who are physically unfit for such employment;

(3) For all children under sixteen who cannot read or write simple sentences in English;

(4) For all male children under sixteen between the hours of eight P. M. and six A. M., or more than forty-eight hours in any week.

#### THE CHILD

In order to be licensed, the child should satisfy the officer appointed for the purpose that it is

(1) fourteen years of age, or, if illiterate, sixteen years of age,

(2) in good health,

(3) able to read and write simple sentences in English and to read and copy the license law.

## THE PARENT

The parent must

(1) Furnish under oath a transcript of the official record of the birth of the child and record of its baptism, or some other satisfactory evidence;

(2) Agree to keep the child in school.

## THE EMPLOYER

The employer, under this law, should be deemed the person who, for profit, supplies the minor with articles to be sold on the street. He should be required to ascertain whether or not the minor is properly licensed.

## THE OFFICIAL

(A Supervisor of Licensed Minors)

Effective legislation for the protection of street-trading children requires that there be a special officer, serving in the capacity of Supervisor of Licensed Minors, entrusted with the duty of enforcing the license law. Such Supervisor should give his whole time—not less than eight hours in a day—to the performance of his duties; viz., to

(1) Patrol the streets to insure that children are not working during the prohibited hours, or violating the terms of their license during the legal hours;

(2) Prosecute all violations;

(3) Submit an annual report.

#### THE SCHOOL

The license system should be in the hands of such a Supervisor of Licensed Minors under the auspices of the School Committee or Board of Education and thereby made a powerful instrument for securing the regular attendance at school of all licensed minors. The Supervisor, therefore, should be part of the school force and should have special truant and police powers in order to deal effectively with all children found trading in the streets during school hours and prosecute all violations.

#### THE PUBLIC

The public should refrain from buying any articles from a minor who is not licensed, i. e., who has no badge. If the public agrees that street-trade laws are desirable, no individual should take it upon himself to break these laws either by supplying a child with articles to sell

or by buying such articles from a child contrary to law. In all cases of violation, the parent, the employer or the consumer—that is, the person who permits a child to sell, the person who supplies him with the goods to sell, or the one who buys the goods from him—should be summoned to court rather than the child himself.

This adult-contributory-delinquency clause is characteristic of all the child-labor laws relating to factories. There is no good reason why an exception should be made of street work. Altogether too many children have been taken from the street into court and committed when the persons who entered into business relations with them would have been prosecuted if adequate legislation were at hand. Such legislation would help restore that respect for law which is now appreciably waning because of a universal belief that the weak are punished while the strong escape.

## CHAPTER IX

### STREET LIFE: A PROGRAMME

*Street life a problem of twentieth-century cities — Children and housing reform — Socialization of the home — The front-room as a playroom — Keeping mothers at home — Use of back yards for play — Roof gardens — Model schools — Social centers — Social settlements — Organic education — Playgrounds — Play streets for children — Organized street play — The Street Supervisor — Plan of supervision — Street pageants — The neighborhood — Does supervision pay? — City planning — Passing of slum streets.*

FOR good or evil, the street ranks with the home and the school in molding child life and personality. How to extract the good from street life and suppress the evil; how to get the street to coöperate rather than compete with home and school, our proudest institutions,— these are the great educational problems of twentieth-century cities.

There are two distinct movements discerni-

ble: the first, an effort to take (and keep) children off the streets; the second, an attempt to improve the conditions for children who are on the streets. The first movement has always stimulated home and school reform and the demand for more playgrounds.

During the last few decades, the home has partly surrendered its old-time supremacy as character builder not merely to the school, its public competitor, but to the street, its most formidable foe. Home reform therefore acquires new meaning and urgency. It means that homes should be so improved as to regain the lost ground and turn defeats into victories. We shall never take the children off the streets unless we first build our homes for children rather than for profit.

Model housing legislation has too frequently been advocated merely from the standpoint of the poor and the working class. The legislation contemplated suggests that these can, and must, get along without the comforts, not to say the luxuries, which the middle class enjoys

simply because it can afford them. Housing legislation is therefore delayed and defeated not only on the ground of expediency and economy, but fundamentally because of an unexpressed belief that, after all, the tenement of today is "good enough" for the poor and for wage-earners.

We are now beginning to see that for many reasons it is clearly not good enough for the children, the wards of the State. Had we originally approached housing legislation from the standpoint of these children who have suffered most, greater victories than air shafts and fire escapes might have been recorded by this time.

In Boston, for example, half a century of fighting for model housing legislation has resulted in the law of 1907 creating "in-takes," air shafts and more alleys than before,—stingy legislative devices for doling out light and air, and useless for any other purpose. Alleys are frequently no wider than air shafts, though somewhat longer. They might be defined as

air shafts without privacy. Back alleys, like Hobbes' State of Nature, are "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

Tenement children still await a legislator with sufficient imagination and courage to say to the sinister forces of profit and greed:

"These children need more than air shafts and alleys, more than bare standing room. They must have room to move around, to play, to grow, to do things. Therefore you shall not build on every inch of the lot, neither back to back nor side to side."

Today this practice is so common that it is evidently being handed down from father to son, as shown by this kindergarten incident. Two little fellows, sons of tenant and landlord, were engaged in block-building. The little tenant insisted on a passageway from the back yard to the street. The little landlord persistently blocked it up.

"I know better," he insisted. "My father don't do it that way."

American municipalities will ultimately come



to realize their unique opportunity for raising the standards of home builders and, at the same time, safeguarding their investments. Home investments should be made safer than stocks and bonds and yet equally fluid. Our cities and States can make them such by the proper use of the vast funds in our savings banks, which largely represent the hard-earned savings of homeless, landless wage-earners.

Reorganizing the homes themselves may bring quicker relief than any housing laws can bring. It may well be, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman has argued for years, that reorganizing the home will dispense with numerous adjuncts which literally crowd out children. Wash-day, for example, is certainly hard on children. But need every home do its own washing? Need every home have the customary washtubs and sewing-machines?

Socializing the home did away with spinning-wheels, wood-piles and private wells. Socializing the home is rapidly dispensing with other old-time functions which are better per-

formed by expert social agencies. The sick-room, for instance, is fast becoming an anomaly because hospitals and dispensaries care for sick people more effectively. Though common kitchens, like common laundries, are still confined very largely to apartment houses, they are equally possible in modern tenements. So are common playrooms. Dr. Montessori's *Children's Houses* are the result of a clear vision of the socialized home of tomorrow.

This forward movement has its formidable opponents. Dr. Montessori was opposed by those who would recreate the home by restoring to it all its old-time characteristics. The two diametrically opposed views,—one upholding the ideal of the homes of the past as a model, the other the socialized homes of the future,—represent the two horns of a dilemma which keeps housing reform in suspense. This indecision is perhaps as much responsible for the present standpat attitude as are the combined forces of poverty and greed. It is almost hopeless to expect any forward movement

until society thinks its way out of this dilemma.

In the meantime, children must live and grow strong and happy. They must even be prepared to grapple with the unsolved problems which they are destined to inherit from us. Having all but banished them from the home, we must somehow reinstate them. Why not begin by converting the so-called parlor or front-room into a playroom? Nothing could be more useless than the parlor of today, generally crowded with stiff furniture. During the week, it is almost always locked; while the children play in the gutters. Being the largest and best-lighted room in the house, the front-room answers admirably the requirements for a playroom or study room.

There is no provision for quiet study in the average tenement home. The homes without a library are still in the majority. If front-rooms were more generally available, the traveling home libraries would vastly encourage self-education. It may be that from such simple beginnings springs the kind of wholesome

family life so characteristic of the German homes where education is still the controlling social ideal.

The tenement home is never so dreary as when it is deserted by both children and parents. The children are on the street. The fathers are away at work; and, all too frequently, the mothers also. The family is thus breaking up before our very eyes. If fathers and mothers had more time at home, there would be fewer children on the streets and fewer problems to deal with.

One of the surest ways of taking large groups of children off the streets is to restore their mothers to their homes. The movement for widows' pensions is due to a growing conviction that the children of a wage-earning widow, who are either locked up in the house or locked out on the street, may eventually cost the State more than a pension. But what of a working mother who is not a widow? Is she better able to look after the children while out washing or scrubbing? Is a drunken

husband who shifts the burden of support on his wife any more useful to the home than a dead husband? State aid for such mothers is gaining ground in different States because, as one judge put it, "If poverty compels them to leave the home, the obvious remedy is to remove poverty itself."

The eight-hour day has too long been fought on grounds of constitutionality instead of humanity. Wage-earning fathers and mothers both need an eight-hour day, not so much because they are wage-earners as because they are fathers and mothers, having duties toward their children which are of vital concern to the State. The constitutional right to work as long as one pleases is affected by duties which may be paramount. All working mothers should be put on an eight or seven-hour day. A husband who is regularly sent up to Deer Island for a "vacation" should instead be made to work. His earnings should be given to his wife that she may remain at home to look after the children.

These suggestions by no means exhaust the devices for taking children off the streets. The restoration of the back yard is as urgent as the conversion of the parlor into a playroom. We must learn to place the needs of children above the needs of garbage, to which the back yard is now devoted.

The old-time house-yards have disappeared from our cities, though children were never more in need of them than they are today. The space between the back walls of two tenements, now called a yard, is practically no more valuable for play than the air shafts which the law requires for light and air. Suburban development has not improved upon the back yard of the tenement zones, but tends rather to reproduce it. Everywhere the mushroom growth of three-deckers goes on unchecked. We are thus foredooming suburbs and towns before they become annexed or citified.

New York's 1913 Housing Code for cities of the second class promises to check the spread of the three-decker. The Code sets up higher

standards in housing construction than have hitherto prevailed. It applies to single dwellings as well as tenements. Like many other codes, it requires a minimum of sanitation, light, air, privacy and safety from fire, but its minimum is greater than that of any previous code. It specifically provides against the construction of flimsy dwellings. It requires that every room open to the outer air. Adequate open spaces, rear and side yards and courts are made mandatory. Buildings of this new type will greatly reduce street problems.

Ample play space, the crying need of Street-Land, is far from being provided for even by model housing laws. In all cities, whether first or second-class,—that is in the largest and worst cities and in those tending to imitate them—much can be done for the children by the proper use of yards and roofs.

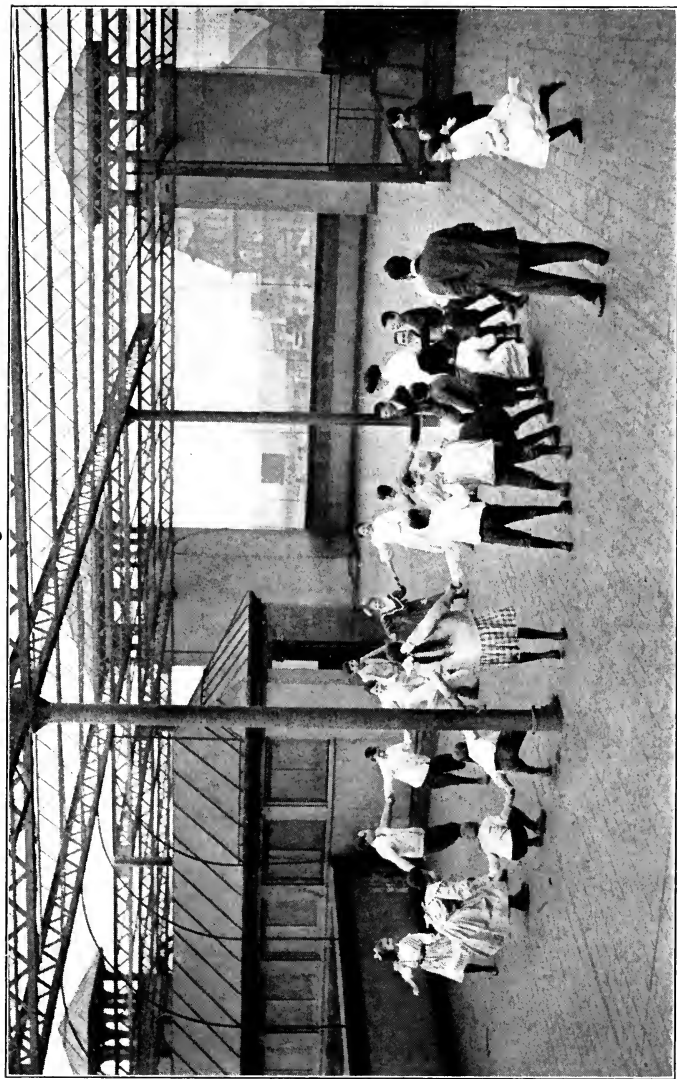
Back yards have great possibilities. If, for instance, the back yards of all tenements in a block were joined, the open space thus created would make a central court which would not

only solve the rear-lot problem, but would become a veritable oasis in the wilderness of our torrid tenements. This kind of central court was worked out by the Association for Good Building of Rome in a most hopeless tenement region known as San Lorenzo. Indeed, this very court gave rise to the *Children's Houses*, now attracting world-wide attention.

Think what it would mean to the mothers of a tenement to be able, through the kitchen windows, to watch their children at play in such a court, protected against street hazards, physical and moral alike. Such courts should ultimately have *Children's Houses*, too. These *Houses* should be under the expert guidance of kindergartners who would eventually transform the courts into kindergartens of real beauty. Such kindergartens would restore to both children and grown-ups the mutual companionship which alone makes life worth living.

Roof gardens are similarly possible. In the justly-called "lung blocks," where the tenements





*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

Profitable Use of School Roof



are jammed in, side to side, often sharing a party wall, a roof garden could run from end to end. The continuous roof garden and central court would restore to the children nearly every inch of space the tenement took from them. A continuous roof would also be a blessing in case of fire. Incidentally, it would improve the sky line. Even where tenements stand apart, the roofs could be connected by means of bridges.

Individual roofs could easily be turned into roof gardens and ideal children's playgrounds. Many schools and social settlements have demonstrated this for years. The Civic Service House roof garden has just completed its tenth year. Besides the flowers we grow ourselves, we have plants and flowers kindly furnished by the Park Department. These give a real garden effect. A canvas awning agreeably tempers the heat. Classes and clubs meet there every night, and the House is as well attended in the summer as in the winter. Several houses in the neighborhood are now using their

roofs for resting and sleeping. Some have splendid flower exhibits every summer.

Tenement-house roofs would be more commonly used today if they were safe and suitable, and if landlords and janitors did not interfere. During the war, an immigrant father bought his boy a toy gun and took him up on the roof to teach him how to shoot. The janitor discovered them and promptly ordered them back to the street.

"This ain't no shootin' gallery," he declared. "What's the street for, anyway?"

Improved schools, like improved homes, will materially help to keep children off the streets. The latest schools have roof gardens, fresh-air rooms and large yards used as playgrounds during the summer; also gymnasiums and baths open all the year round. Some have gardens which are cultivated by the children even during vacation. Open-air schools for anæmic children and summer review schools for backward children are on the increase. Both types have had a tremendous success. Many schools

have children's libraries and study rooms. An increasingly large number even have moving pictures.

Some model schools are going still further in their effort to meet every legitimate neighborhood need. Their center of interest is no longer the school building but the neighborhood. They aim to encourage, and frequently to direct, the activities of the children outside the schoolroom. Presently we shall learn to measure the influence of the school by what happens outside. The model school is coming to be a clearing-house for neighborhood interests and activities.

Schools are fast becoming social centers. They are used evenings and Sundays by grown-ups as well as children. As the kindergartens effectively take off the streets in the morning thousands of little children under compulsory school age, so social centers are now taking off the streets at night the youth above the compulsory age. Four hundred social centers have been opened in the United States within a dec-

ade, with a phenomenal attendance and a multitude of activities.

There are over four hundred social settlements in this country, forerunners of the social centers. In many instances, settlements, too, were originally inspired by the motive of taking children off the streets and providing for them a safer and saner setting. The social centers tend gradually to absorb the regularly-organized activities of the social settlements. The settlements are always pioneering in newer fields and experimenting with types of service which need demonstration and the backing of enlightened public opinion. They have always experimented with many forms of caring for street children, of interesting them, of safeguarding them.

The street-corner gang, for example, has been its constant challenge. It is a function of the settlement to work out newer methods of wholesomely engaging the interests and activities of these gangs. Its methods are freely communicated to the social centers.

Having learned the secret of organizing gangs into clubs best suited to the needs of their members, the center cheerfully opens its doors and bids them enter.

Most moving-picture houses are not nearly so particular about whom to admit as social centers and settlements. That is one reason why the movies attract millions while the others attract hundreds. In this country, about eight million people attend moving-picture shows daily. We are told that at least a tenth of the population of Greater New York goes every day. No recreation is so popular, not even baseball. Street children, when they are not at the movies, are often similarly engaged on the curbstones,—imitating in word and deed the heroes and heroines they have seen on the screen.

The movies are more in keeping with the spirit of the street than the sedate schools. Therefore they easily compete with the schools in spite of the admission fee. Were the movies always educational, they would simply be sup-

plementing the work of the schools. There is certainly much in them which schools will finally have to incorporate. The influence of the movies can no more be ignored than that of the street.

The immediate problem of the ideal school is therefore this: How to relate itself to the overwhelming influences affecting children and to make them serve the social purpose.

The next twenty-five years will witness the reorganizing and socializing of child life in Street-Land in ways undreamed of in the whole history of education. Nothing will be done as it is today. We shall, in the first place, insist on the *whole-life* plan of education. True education is a continuous process. Every waking moment of the child's life should be educational. We shall also insist on the full-day schooling of children up to and including the crucial years of adolescence. The part-time schools still existing in the city of New York are frequently criticized. What about the



part-time schooling (five hours out of twenty-four!) prevalent all over the country?

Professor Dewey, in his profound volume on the "School and Society," worked out a symbolic plan of the future school. The plan calls for a school building placed in the center of a garden. At one side of the building are the homes. Footpaths connect homes and school, suggesting the "free interplay of influences, materials and ideas between the home life and that of the school." At another side of the school building, walks lead to garden, park and country, suggesting the relation of the schools to "natural environment, the great field of geography in the widest sense." From the garden, Professor Dewey suggests, the children should be "led on to the surrounding parks and fields, and then into the wider country with all its facts and forces." On the third side of this ideal school building, doors open out to the world of business, suggesting the necessity for "free play between the school and the needs

and forces of industry." On the fourth side is the "university proper, with its various phases, its laboratories, its resources in the way of libraries, museums and professional schools."

This plan indirectly condemns streets and alleys, the movies, and the many sordid influences which play havoc with our present scheme of education. If this plan could be revised in the same broad spirit of idealism, yet adapted to meet the immediate needs of childhood in our huge American cities, we should have a working model of the ideal school of the future. But this working model would have to take into account the intense activities of street children which, if properly directed, might count materially in organic education,—the only education worth having.

The emphasis on organic education by Mrs. Marietta L. Johnson in her new non-equipment school at Fairhope, Alabama, is reassuring. Her school ought to teach the lesson that organic education under supervision can be based quite as much on street as on farm activities.

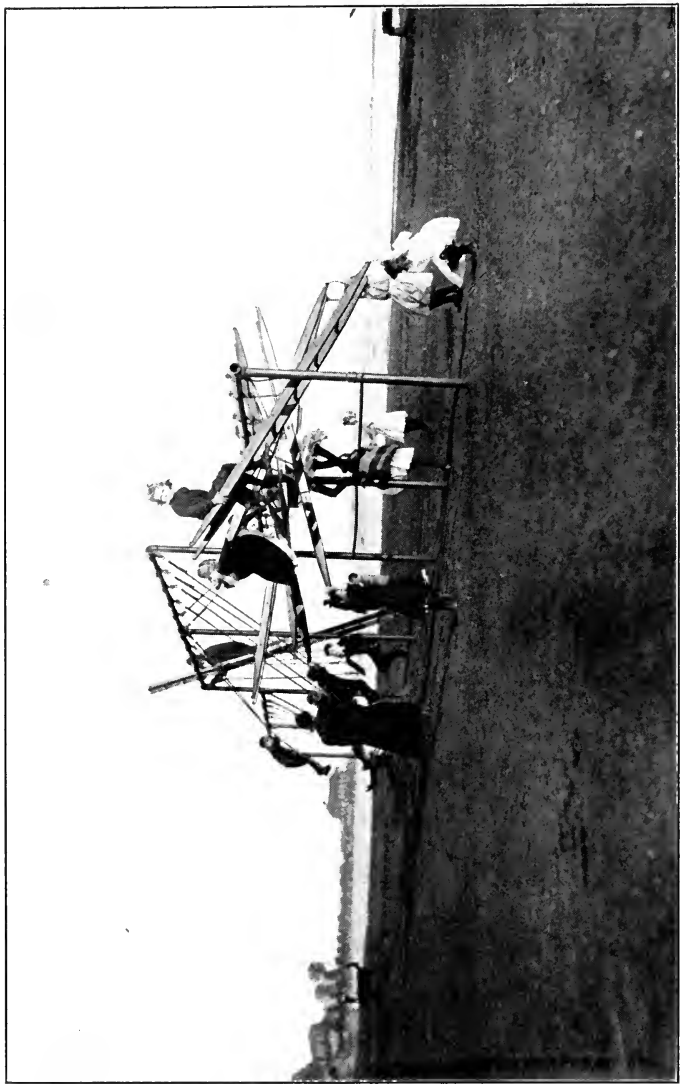
The persecuted street ball-player is often but the league pitcher in the making. To see the educational value of this activity, all that is necessary, as has been suggested, is to translate it into educational terms. Ball-pitching, or even stone-throwing, is but another name for motor and sense coördination. Run through the whole gamut of street activities and you will find that nearly all of them, under the direction of a Mrs. Johnson or a Dr. Montessori and interpreted in educational terms, can be made to contribute to the organic development of children.

It is not old-fashioned grammar schools, but modern playgrounds, which are paving the way for organic education. The playgrounds organize all that is good in street activities. They also combat much that is evil. Playgrounds are the first device of modern cities for taking children off the streets and yet keeping them out of doors. An ideal playground successfully counteracts the effects of bad home and street alike. These achievements were no easy victory.

The street habit itself is not nearly so injurious, physically at least, as the indoor habit prevalent during certain seasons of the year. How to reach the children who need outdoor life most is still an issue; but the diversified playground, with its sand boxes, its garden patches and its swings, is gradually winning all classes.

An immigrant child sees in the grounds fringed with grass and shrubs his favorite park, the sight of which often calls forth the exclamation: "This is just like the old country!" The least touch of green brings sweet memories of hayfields and verdant pastures—once his playground. While he is a stranger to the tenement, he is no stranger to a blade of grass. Although American baseball seems more difficult the longer you look at it; yet, given the opportunity, an immigrant boy soon learns to play it,—even in Yiddish if need be.

The relation between playgrounds and street-corner loafing is as intimate as between child labor and delinquency, or between unemploy-



*Photograph by Lewis W. Hine for the National Child Labor Committee*

## A Dump Turned into a Playground



ment and misemployment. Therefore, in these days of recurrent emphasis on vocational guidance, it is important to note the value of natural guidance, through play, to the discovery of one's real strength in a given occupation. Vocational counselors would do well to advise with playground supervisors fully as much as with school teachers in order to discover what life work children are best suited for.

The useful playground also enjoys the privilege of giving the kind of moral guidance which is needed to counteract rampant street vices. The important first step in this direction, following the precedent of the school, is to keep saloons, pool rooms and all other vicious influences at a safe distance from the playground. Here is an opportunity for setting up standards of decency which the streets so easily confound and for which we so often blame the children.

Certain immediate improvements are necessary to make our playgrounds what they ought to be. Some are playgrounds in name only.

Think of *playgrounds* with brick and concrete pavements. Such beds are hot and hard, and unfit for summer play. The best grounds are made of gravel or planted with grass. Some cities commonly use their parks for play under direction. Other cities permit them to stand spick and span in their adornments of grass and shrubs and flowers, while the people for whom they are intended are warned to "keep off the grass" and the little children are forced to play on unattractive lots and in dusty alleys.

It would add greatly to the efficiency of summer playgrounds if lunches were served to the children, many of whom have little to eat from the hour they come, in the morning to the time they leave, in the afternoon. Many a playground instructor has asserted that some children go hungry all day. Teachers at a conference testified that when children were asked why they did not go home to eat, they often said there was nothing there for them, or, more frequently, that nobody was at home.

The real trouble with our playgrounds is that



there are not enough of them. A study of child welfare in the leading cities and towns of Massachusetts, made by the Federation of Women's Clubs, brought out the fact that in most cities where there are ordinances against play on the street or sidewalk the children who play there are a mile or more away from a playground. During the recreation survey made in the city of Providence, two thousand and seventy children were found on the streets after school hours. Of these, thirty-two per cent. were playing and fifty-four per cent. were idle. The people of the Greenwich Village section of New York, under the brilliant leadership of Mrs. V. G. Simkhovitch, are figuring out how to squeeze twenty-four thousand children onto sixteen thousand square feet of playground.

Tolstoi says somewhere that Russia's greatest needs are "schools, schools and schools." Congested America's greatest needs are playgrounds, playgrounds and playgrounds. More play space is the cry of every city. The playgrounds we have are often far away from

the children who need them. Playground teachers approve of bringing play spaces nearer the children. They say that some children "haven't enough energy to leave their door-steps. They sit on the curbing all day long with their babies."

"Anybody can start a playground" is the new slogan of the Playground and Recreation Association of America. Get the mothers interested, and they will get the land and donate the equipment. A dozen small playgrounds are better than one large one and are easier to establish. They should be near schools, under supervision, and open all the year round.

One of the cheapest and quickest ways of increasing the amount of play space is to close certain side streets to through traffic and set them aside for play under supervision. There is precedent in other fields for such trafficless streets for children. Commercial zones have frequently been outlined for various purposes; for example, for peddlers during certain hours. Safety islands, or guarded spaces and squares,

encouraged by European examples, are common in New York. Heavy teaming has been excluded for years from avenues bearing the legend—"For Pleasure Driving Only." Residential streets will, it is hoped, bear similar legends—"For Play Only" or "Children's Playground. Do not enter."

The suggestion of the creation of "streets for children only" was enthusiastically adopted by the First City and Town Planning Conference of Massachusetts as a basic plank in their platform; and the different representatives pledged themselves to endeavor to carry the resolution into effect.

This method of setting aside residential streets for children's play under supervision is being tried by the Parks and Playgrounds Associations of Chicago, Baltimore and New York. An editorial in the *Outlook* gives the following account of the most promising New York experiment:

" 'If you can't get what you want, make the best of what you have,' seems to be the sensible

motto of the Parks and Playgrounds Association of New York City. Unable to get a sufficient number of playgrounds to accommodate all the youngsters of the metropolis, the Association, in coöperation with the Police Department, has made temporary playgrounds out of a number of streets in the city. It is nothing new for children to play in crowded city streets, but it is quite novel for boys and girls to be turned loose in streets from which all traffic has been diverted, and to be able to play ball and hop-sotch without fear of horses' hoofs and the wheels of auto trucks. That is the privilege that some of the children of New York have now, thanks to the Parks and Playgrounds Association and the Police Commissioner, whose heart is in the right place.

"The late Mayor Gaynor once said: 'If I had my way, I would close up every street and turn it into a playground for the boys and girls.' If he were alive today, he would be pleased to see that a start has been made in the right direction. Parts of seven Manhattan streets are now set aside for children: at three o'clock every afternoon a policeman appears and ropes off the sacred area, into which no vehicles of any sort may come until the ropes are removed at six o'clock and traffic resumed.

"To each 'play street,' one or more instructors have been assigned who preside over the three-hour sessions of handball, dancing and other approved pastimes of childhood. From three to six o'clock six hundred children crowd into each of these recreation blocks every afternoon, and so popular and successful has this experiment in applied sociology proved that it is planned to open other streets soon. The streets chosen for play are in crowded residential districts, and are not, of course, streets where much traffic is demanded by business interests. They are, in short, streets that might well be permanently consecrated to the uses of childhood. Mayor Gaynor was right; the modern city is conducted with entirely too much regard for the uses of haggling age and entirely too little for the interests of rollicking youth."

Some may object to this plan of using a street for play on the ground that it would make the neighborhood too noisy. A Washington hospital petitioned that the adjoining vacant lot be turned into a playground because it realized that play under supervision was certain to be less noisy than undirected street play. Hos-

pitals and churches have generally been active in securing quiet zones surrounding their property; thereby establishing a precedent and principle which may well be applied to other neighborhoods. A quiet zone is secured by the total or partial exclusion of traffic and by "deadening the noise through the use of special pavements."

The ideal play street, in order to best serve the interests of children, should be of asphalt and without sidewalks. There ought to be benches for those who wish to rest, especially for little mothers and their babies. For small children there should be sand boxes, seat-swings, teeter-boards and play wagons. Portions of such a street might systematically be set apart at different times of the day for different groups of older boys and girls,—for roller-skating, kite-flying, volley-ball and other such games.

The exclusion of traffic would vastly encourage the playing of organized games. Peggy, teacher, hide-and-go-seek, marbles, tag, run-

my-good-sheep-run and bow-wow are now played with more or less success. But some of the most exciting games,—among them relieve, prisoners' base, handball and hockey,—cannot be played on the street because of continuous traffic. What children need is unimpeded play space and an organizer or supervisor.

The street is like an automobile,—very serviceable and enjoyable with a skilled chauffeur at the wheel, but very destructive if allowed to run wild. The street, therefore, needs a supervisor, a person to look after it, just as an automobile needs a chauffeur.

We have already seen what a supervisor of licensed minors can do for children trading in the streets. Such a supervisor could do even more for children playing in the streets. His opportunities to organize and rationalize child life in Street-Land are no less extraordinary than those which challenged Pestalozzi, Mann and Montessori in the field of education. His technique would be a matter of daily unfolding, but it would presently become as unique as that

of the probation officer, school visitor, friendly visitor and boys' club director. He would need, to a large degree, the qualities of the Montessori "directress."

The Street Supervisor should so organize the play of the children in his charge that they may have the right ideas about play when left to themselves. His methods should closely resemble those of the playground director. His success would come chiefly from his ability to promote free play, for which the street is best adapted.

While he will eventually reform street conditions, he must, as a practical man, be prepared in the beginning to face conditions as he finds them. Groups of children will be forming and breaking up before his very eyes. His ability to hold a group will not depend on the usual walls and boundaries of the playground, but on an innate interest in the members of the group and its activities. His good sense alone will foresee and forestall the obstacles in his path. His personality will be his best



equipment. Indeed he will have no other to start with.

Lack of equipment is no longer considered a handicap, but an asset. The Young Men's Christian Associations all over the country are engaging secretaries to carry on non-equipment work with boys. The Newark secretary writes that his main object is to further recreative opportunities by combining and utilizing more efficiently all existing agencies and, especially, to direct street and vacant-lot play. The promising educational experiments in Gary, Indiana, now attracting national attention are the direct result of the non-equipment which William A. Wirt faced when he was called to that city as Superintendent of Schools. He did not find a single school to superintend. What he did is what the Street Supervisor will have to do; namely, utilize and work with the things at hand.

The Supervisor must have a strong social sense. He must be able to mix well, not only with the children, but also with the grown-ups.

He must therefore know his community. One of the main reasons why most school teachers in congested neighborhoods are not more effective with the pupils is that they do not live there. They do not really know the children outside the schoolroom. The Street Supervisor should certainly begin by living in the neighborhood where he works. The social settlement idea is that the best neighbor is the most successful settler. The most successful playground director is the man who lives on the playground.

This will help the Supervisor in working with his neighbors. They will be glad to help him once they know that he is really working in the interests of their children. Every social worker knows that children are the key to family affection and neighborly love. The children's sincere friend need never worry. He will get much support from the neighborhood, whose resources far outrival those of the best-equipped playground.

There are many obvious reasons for the need of street supervision. There are in this coun-

try many millions of school children under fourteen who especially need street guidance. The four million children from fifteen to nineteen years of age, whose leisure hours are spent on the streets, are practically without supervision of any kind. We have already seen how many bad habits are contracted on the streets. If street life were supervised, these bad habits would be checked and good habits encouraged. Opportunities for coöperation, fellowship, loyalty and honesty are greater on the streets, where life flows freely, than in school or at home. By encouraging children in these directions, the Street Supervisor will have the unique civic opportunity of laying the very foundations of citizenship.

How is the Supervisor going to look after the children on the streets?

Let him first consult the children. We do not often do that and therefore we accomplish little. Children do not like our ways and work against us. We generally want them to be like ourselves. They want us to be like

themselves. We win out in the end, but they never forgive us. Some of them hate us ever afterward. What boy has ever truly forgiven a police officer for taking him to court or a truant officer for taking him away to the reform school?

But how they love us when we work with them, not against them; when we feel for them, play with them! How wildly they cheer their umpire, their captain, their club leader, their chairman! Like police and truant officers, these people also look after them; but with what different results! Children are glad to be looked after in a friendly way; glad to be taught how to swim without drowning, how to jump without falling, how to play ball without breaking windows. Children would welcome a street friend, one who would watch over them like a mother or a big brother, who would see that they did not get run over, that they were not bullied or cheated or driven to the wall.

Let us give street children such a friend. We might name him Street Supervisor. The

children will probably call him captain, umpire, or Uncle George, depending on the grace of God in him.

He could organize the children into effective street-cleaning brigades as Colonel Waring did in New York. This experiment in self-government still stands out as the most brilliant ever tried in Street-Land. The older boys and girls would be glad to coöperate with the Street Supervisor, to act as his lieutenants or seconds in command. They love to be useful, helpful, important. Give a boy a chance to act the part of a man and you have won in him the most faithful servant, the most dutiful slave. Such helpers would be invaluable in looking after the little ones, starting games with them, and doing many acts of kindness which only little mothers and little fathers can do.

Parents, too, would be glad to help. They would doubtless keep the side streets cleaner if the Supervisor explained to them just how they could be used as playgrounds. Under his direction, or that of an acknowledged neighbor-

hood leader, a "clean-up, paint-up" campaign could be inaugurated once or twice a year with the help of the children. Together, parents might decide on a better system of garbage removal so as to avoid the litter and filth which make the streets so forbidding on collection days. They would also wage campaigns against spitting on the sidewalks.

Let the Supervisor call frequent parents' meetings, preferably in the open, to consider plans for a fair or pageant. Similar experiments have demonstrated how a side street can be turned into a theater, a sidewalk into a stage. Let the children be the players and the grown-ups the audience. Neighborhoods would be amazed at their own transformation. Little pageants would become frequent incidents; *Oberammergau*s annual midsummer events. An appeal for scenery would yield a crop of flower-boxes on window-sills, which no prize competition contest could surpass. What ribbons and clothes and fans would be brought forth from the hidden treasures of ten-

ement trunks and closets! And how they would dress the players!

Such a street pageant was given on the East Side of New York. It was presented by the members of the Henry Street Settlement to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Settlement. "The six episodes of the pageant represented picturesque social gatherings of the peoples who had lived at different times in the neighborhood of Henry Street,—the Indians, the Dutch, the English, the Irish, the Scotch, the Germans, the Italians, and the Russians. The costumes were planned and the incidents selected to recreate the atmosphere of each epoch." The following is an outline of the pageant:

#### EPISODE I.—about 1617

##### INDIAN

The Manhattas in council gravely welcome the White Strangers with gifts of wampum and skins, receiving in return bright colored trinkets and strange garments from over the seas. They initiate the Traders into the ceremony of the Peace Pipe and bury the hatchet with joyous songs and dances. The chief bids farewell to the white men and disappears, followed by his tribe,

leaving the Dutchmen in possession of their new territory.

1. Medicine Song.    2. Medicine Dance Song.    3. Dance Song.
4. Medicine Song.    5. Dance Song.    6. Choral.

## EPISODE II.—about 1675

### DUTCH

#### A STRAWBERRY PICNIC

Dutch vrouws and burghers with their large families enjoy a Strawberry Picnic in the days when the fields of Manhattan Island were covered with wild berries. They are joined by the young girls who come to bleach their linen and by the children on their way home from school. In the midst of the fun, the postie dashes by on horseback on his way to Boston carrying the monthly mail, "which was instituted for a more speedy intelligence and dispatch of affairs." He is followed by all, waving and singing to speed him on his dangerous journey.

1. Dutch Jigg.    2. Model Children Song.    3. Linen Song.
4. Song: "Hannes Has New Clumpers."
5. Wooden Shoe Dance.    6. Wind Mill Dance.
7. The Postie Song.

## EPISODE III.—about 1760

### COLONIAL DAYS

Early on May morning the little children come trooping from the woods to hang their posies on the doorsteps so that those they love may be surrounded by fairies all through the year. The mothers find their



gifts, and as they sit in the doorways with their spinning wheels and samplers, they sing to the children a ballad of long ago. A May Party enters; the King, Queen, Court, Chimney Sweeps, Dancers, Milk Maids and Sailors merrily dance and play around the May Pole.

1. Cornish May Song.
2. Ballad: Margaret Who Lost Her Garter.
3. Money Musk.    4. Greeting.    5. May Pole Dance.
6. Minuet.    7. Sailor's Hornpipe.    8. March.
9. Milk Maids' Dance—"Mary, Molly and I."

#### EPISODE IV.—1806

A glimpse of the children who, a little more than a century ago, were taken by their Quaker parents to the first Public School in New York, which was opened in Henry Street. They play the old-fashioned games until the school mistress rings the bell for them to begin the day's lessons.

1. The Mulberry Bush.    2. London Bridge.

#### EPISODE V.—about 1860

On a moonlight spring evening in the sixties, girls in hoopskirts, and young men in stocks gather on the stoops of the houses and sing old ballads and dance quaint polkas and quadrilles.

1. Silver Threads.    2. A Polka.    3. Varsouvienne.
4. Juanita.    5. Quadrille.    6. The Mocking Bird.

#### EPISODE VI.—1893-1913

A picture of all the nationalities that have lived in

Henry Street in the last fifty years—the Irish, the Scotch, the Germans, the Italians, and the Russians. They sing again the songs and dance the dances that contribute so much poetry to the life of the city.

1. Cathleen Mavourneen.
2. Irish Jig.
3. Irene Liebe.
4. "Dance Dear Partner Mine."
5. German Hopping Dance.
6. Neapolitan Bacarolle.
7. Tarantelle.
8. The Volga Boatman.
9. Russian Folk Dance.
10. Russian Court Dance.
11. Gott un Sein Mishpet Is Gerecht.
12. Russian Kasatchak.

Such experiments have been tried not only on the upper and lower East Side of New York, but all over the country. A Pageant of the Prairies lately given in North Dakota was as successful as the Pageant of the Melting Pot of New York City. Pageants, festivals and religious feasts are strong reminders of old-country settings. They invite the coöperation of all the forces in a neighborhood and bring out its best resources.

No street programme can be effective without the backing of the neighborhood. The neighborhood should be made the keeper of the conscience of the child. Nothing inspires a neighborhood so readily as an appeal in behalf

of its children. All rally to the call of the child.

It would not take long to provide seats for tired children if the neighborhood once realized how tired are the little fellows resting on the curbstone. Once a neighborhood is convinced of the hazards of late hours, it will require no curfew. It will sound its own alarm. In the spirit of self-made Chicago, nearly every community, large or small, says, "Show me and I will."

Supervision of street life would impose many duties on the community as a whole. Every community should maintain enough schools, playgrounds and recreation centers for all its children. Street supervision cannot take the place of these. Every community must also provide for the sanitation and safety of its streets. It will have to supply police matrons and a Street Supervisor. These executives will need adequate salaries and power to act in emergencies without fear or favor. They should hold office under civil service, prefer-

ably under the direction of the board of education. The community should make provision for the adequate relief of dependent, neglected and delinquent children, who appreciably lower the standards of street life. Adequate social standards of street life require that the streets be rid of beggars (juvenile as well as adult), cripples, contagious children, child workers, pick-pockets, "drunks" and street walkers,—all of whom lead children astray.

More important than the enactment of street legislation is the maintenance in the community of a persistent lively interest in its enforcement. Without such an interest, all laws are dead letters and all officials useless. In an indifferent community, such officials are often removed simply because they have no organized backing. The interests of a small group of real-estate owners solely influenced by the possibility of a rise in taxes frequently outweigh the wishes of a whole neighborhood.

It is well, therefore, to raise the question of

expense now. How much would it cost to carry out this plan of supervision? The 1914 report on Boston's playgrounds shows that they cost about fifty cents a month per child. The children's corners with which Boston is experimenting cost twenty cents a month per child. Surely it is worth a quarter to every taxpayer, direct or indirect, to keep a child off the streets one whole month.

Unfortunately, too many of our streets, especially our side streets, are unfit to walk on, let alone to play on. The unpaved streets of Chicago alone, if pieced together, would reach as far as Boston. And a poor road it would be as compared with the beautiful roads for automobiling now found in nearly every State in the Union. Making our residential streets as suitable for children's play as our modern city thoroughfares and State roads are for automobiling would constitute the big initial cost.

Intelligent city planning will in the future make better provision for the children of

Street-Land. City planning and replanning have come to be widely recognized as absolute necessities. The best development of our municipalities, the health, efficiency and happiness of their citizens,—more especially the little citizens,—make city planners as imperative as home architects. The ideal city planner will be concerned not merely with what a city ought to look like, but also with what the citizens will look and act like.

He will fully appreciate, for example, the relation between drinking fountains and saloons. He will not lose sight of the need of abundant resting-places, shelters, convenience stations and bubbling fountains wherever the comfort of the public (including the children) makes them necessary. He will plan for proper coördination in the use of streets, providing in advance for the interests of little children as well as of big business. In these and numerous other ways, he will save the cities of tomorrow from the fatal and foolish mistakes of the cities of yesterday.

Replanning our older cities—in other words, correcting their mistakes—has been transformed from a dream into reality by the brave and inspiring attempt on the part of Congress, at the death-bed request of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, to improve—if need be, to abolish—the side streets and alleys of our national capital. This act of Congress marks the passing of the slum streets of the city of Washington. It is at once an invitation and a challenge to other cities to do likewise.

The word “slum” is a hard word. It is a foreign word imported from England, and it would never have found its way into American dictionaries but for the folly of American cities. Far from profiting by English experience, our own municipalities reproduced the kind of houses and streets which invited the “slum” rebuke. Our cities have failed in the most elementary duty of keeping their streets clean. They have failed, if one may be permitted the phrase, to wash their own faces. Yet they scold their street children for being

dirty. But in this, children merely reflect their environment.

The suggestion is now commonplace that the way to abolish poverty is to let the poor alone and concentrate all efforts on the causes which make them poor. Since it is the almost savage environment which makes many city children little savages, we must learn that our chief task is to civilize the environment. Nor can this be accomplished by philanthropy or law. These are curative, not preventive, agencies. Sound economics, made popular by safe investments in homes for the people built by the municipality or State,—as in Letchworth, England, and in Belgium,—alone will ultimately abolish slums and slum products and prevent their reproduction in the rising cities of America.

One Fourth of July I was asked to speak on the kind of citizens the children of immigrants are likely to be. I went to "Little Italy" that morning for suggestions. North Square was crowded with the folks of the Sunny Land.



Everybody spoke Italian and looked Italian. The neighborhood seemed distinctly foreign. For a time I could not detect one American note or mien.

All at once I heard an American tune and presently I witnessed a picturesque Fourth of July procession. It consisted of a dozen little tots headed by Tony, aged five, with an American flag in each hand. Tony led the singing. He did his best in an effort to recall the song he had learned the day before in the kindergarten. He tried it to several tunes: "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching," "Yankee Doodle," and others. None of these suited the words. They did not ring true to the tune of the kindergarten song. Suddenly, in an outburst of patriotism, he faced about, brought his procession to a halt and, waving his flags in the air, shouted, "Well, anyway, hurrah for George Washington!"

There was no mistaking the genuineness of this spontaneous outburst of patriotism, or of the general applause which rang through the

square. It was distinctly American. What was really foreign was Tony's sordid environment, his street setting. This, however, was not of his making, but ours; and it may yet prove his unmaking.

Here, then, was my Fourth of July theme. I went away and told my audience that the kind of American young Tony would be depended on the kind of American we all wanted him to be; and, more particularly, upon the environment and the opportunities we were offering him. In plain language, the entire street problem is "up to us."

THE END

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